days when the themes were from mythology and legend rather than 546
modern streets, thus necessitating flights through the air, chariots in the 177.
clouds, magical transformations, magnificences of palaces and celestial
gardens lighted by the moon. Now the films go in largely for themes of 54
real life, but unlike Western films, the actors and actresses still do not
set the standard for everyday dress and behaviour. A cinema actress,
even when playing the part of a girl of most respectable parents, was
rendered attractive by touches which in real life were considered by my
mother to be suggestive of loose behaviour—her hair was overdecked with
flowers, her garments had floral designs, her forehead was bordered
with a fringe, and the neck of her jacket fitted loosely. On the screen,
however, my mother and aunts watched this enthralled. They liked also
the way that love was shown, concentrating on sentimentality rather than
sex. There was no kissing or attracting attention to the body, but oh
the pining, the sighing, the stamping of feet, the coyness and the moonlight
gazing of Burmese cinema heroines. No wonder that aunts who
once in a long while accompanied us to an American film, looked all
around during the passionate kissing scenes, with scrutiny of our reaction
to such displays of what should not be admitted to exist.

If the Burmese cinema failed to draw the crowd of young English- 533
speaking men and women away from the Hollywood films, Burmese ren- 177.
dering of jazz conquered them completely and gave them no acquaintance
with the originals from America and England. There was a body of mo- 54
dern songs in the true Burmese style which, unlike the old classical songs,
could be sung with ease by the untrained voice, but despite this Burma
did not escape the craze which has grown up in all countries of the Far
East for snatching up tunes written in America and England and putting
them to words in the native tongue. Still, Burmans of fastidious taste
might object to the lack of music in the tunes, rather than to the words
of these popular songs, for the Burmese words are never so execrable as
the original English compositions; often there is real wit, poetic brevity,
and even philosophic comment. The technique was to take the refrain
of a Western jazz tune as the repetitive theme, with a slight alteration in
the rhythm, and to embroider this extensively with a slapdash quality of
Burmese turns of melody. The theme of the Burmese version probably
bore no relation to that of the original. For example, the sickly account
of a romantic meeting in the Isle of Capri was converted into a satirical
skit on the Rangoon fashion of giving garden tea-parties in the English
manner. Whereas the Burmese custom at weddings and other celebra- 574
tions in the country towns was to invite townspeople to a full meal, 533
with the feasting of monks and the distribution of gifts, the Yangonthu 177.
had taken to employing the catering services of Western-style restaurants 54
369

to bring chairs, tables, food and attendants for the sum of Re. 1/4 per
533 head. The tune which was written to sing sentimentally of the Isle of
177. Capri now sang, with romping glee, the English names of these delicacies:

54 Vi-ta-mo, co-co *hnin amyo son myi*
369 Ham pattie, cream roll *hnin* cold coff-ee,
Columbia *dat pya hnin htè hso myi,*
Plain cake *hnin* Gold Flake *le kyamma wè myi.*
Etc.........

Vitamo, cocoa and all kinds you'll see,
Ham patties, cream rolls and cold coffee
With Columbia record playing merrily,
Plain cake and Gold Flake will I buy for tea.

Expensive things, expensive things of all kinds for eating,
I'll order from a restaurant for this fashion meeting.
Sit up round a table in gathering so hearty,
A very respectable tea-drinking party.

Don't eat of Burmese comestibles,
They are so indigestible.

On the other hand the lilting tune of the Campdown Races was slowed down to sing:

Chit-te thu ko tway hma tha,
Seik pyaw,
Aye da.

Only when you see the loved one,
Heart is happy,
Mind at rest.

369 Compared to dwellers of country towns, Yangonthu not only went
177. to the cinema oftener, but also read a good deal more, probably in the
absence of so many happy-eating-gatherings and charity feasts. There
53 were four daily newspapers in Burmese and a few which appeared bi- or
204 tri-weekly. The daily paper provided a lot of reading matter for the
538 average person; a grandaunt of mine made it a daily institution to sit on her verandah with a bottle of lemonade and the *New Light of Burma* whose 24 pages were filled with international news, home politics, articles on the economic development of the country and attacks on abuses prevalent in social life, exhortations to good behaviour to the younger generation, reports of cases of a scandalous nature, just like a popular daily anywhere in the world. But in Burma there was no distinction such as exists between a paper which tries to keep a dignified

Be
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customer has gone his way. It used to be a common thing in the palace, during the late king's reign, to let loose a number of birds for the delectation of foreign worshippers at the golden feet, and the expansion of the royal merit. Ill-natured people said all the birds were recaptured in the next room, and appeared again for the next display of charity; but of that I can say nothing.

Be
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Ba
[563]
Be
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Each house, with its ground, is surrounded by a rude fence more or less substantial according to the character of the district. Where there are many tigers or ill-doers, and especially north of Mandalay, where formerly the Kachins might swoop down any night, this is made very high and strong, and is further rendered effective by a formidable array of sharpened bamboos. Except where the British have taken the matter in hand, the village roads are simply places where the jungle is kept from growing. There is no attempt at metalling; in fact there is no material for the purpose. In some pretentious villages indeed there is a raised path formed of bricks set on edge, and about three feet broad. This is regarded as a public work of great value, and a distinction to the inhabitants of the place. It usually leads to the monastery. In many villages, however, it would be impossible to move about during the rains without some such contrivance. The mud would be too deep, and logs are slippery even to bare feet.

Be
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533 ●

Swinging by a couple of ropes from the roof hangs in the centre of the house a rude basket, made snug with a blanket or some old clothes. This is the baby's cradle, and the mother may often be seen sitting by it crooning and gently swaying it backwards and forwards. Some of the lullabies are very clever. I have tried to give a version of one of the most popular, with as near an approach to the metre as practicable. It is sung to the favourite te-dat air.

Be
539

SEIN-NI LA-YAUNG

Clouds in Heaven,
Bright as levin,
Dyed with rosy diamond's light,
Did the Nine Gems
Stud your white hems,

545 Zawtagômma melodrama, which the old sayā at Pegu has
just brought out, and which is having a tremendous run all
through the low country. The song is about the Saddan
mere, the lake of the Lord White Elephant, where golden
lotuses flower perpetually, where the gorgeous yin-dwin bird
sails on the silvery waters, great butterflies flap about with
painted wings and sip the nectar of the fabled jasmine, and
peacocks stalk proudly on the jewelled margin, while around
522 roam elephants white, red, and black in happy security. The
singer has hardly finished when the lu-byet, the village jester,
breaks in with a travesty of the whole thing, mocking at the
tremolos and the lofty style, and taking off the peculiarities
of the singer. He went out to a lake too, and launched a
canoe on it, but he was capsized by a huge creature that
came up from below; and then he found that he had got
into a slimy buffalo wallow, out of which he only escaped
after great peril from the horns of its three outraged owners,
who butted him under the surface many times; and at last,
when he crawled out, he was so brown and dirty that some
passers-by took him for a hermit, and gave him some rotten
522 plantains in alms. Before the "prince" has time to show
593 any bad temper, a girl commences a coquettish ditty, somewhat after the fashion of the English "Paddle my own
canoe," about a poor wife whose husband comes home and
storms and growls and abuses because there is no rice ready
cooked, softens down when he has crammed himself with
curry and rice, but breaks out into grumbling again at night
because his wife cries and will not go to sleep. Such tyranny
the young lady declares she will never expose herself to, or
● 533 at any rate "she'll be no submissive wife." Then there are a
832 few love-songs, wherein the girls are compared with the maids
of the palace in Mandalay, and the Mandalay girls generally
(who are *ex officio* pretty) with the daughters of nats, with
Madi, the model wife of Wethandaya (the prince who in his
next existence became the Lord Buddha), with flowers and
stars and gems, and whatever similes lovers all the world
over are in the habit of making. The swaying of the body
as they walk, the turning in of the elbows, the fragrant
powder on their cheeks and necks, and a few other items
which would not commend themselves to a Western admirer,

are recorded with enthusiasm and delighted precision of 533
detail; and when an hour or so has been passed in this way, 832
a little more rice-husking is done, and the girls set to work 527
getting ready the onions and sesamum seed, and slicing up 521
the cocoa-nut kernels. This sort of thing goes on all the
night through. There is half an hour's work, and then an
hour of singing and story-telling and gossip; about the
great Shinbinthalyaung, the gigantic recumbent image of
Shin Gautama dug up lately near Pegu; of the two min-laungs,
the embryo kings, who have been revealed there, and
the third one, who is foretold by the old theit-sa, the
prophecy which declares that he will restore the ancient
Talaing kings and revive religion; of the new hti which is
being set up on the pagoda of the lotus tank, and its exceeding
splendour, each single one of the concentric rings having
been assigned as a particular favour to one out of many
competing districts. Then there is a discussion as to the [291]
new fashion of turbans, the one plain colour with worked
flowers on it, which has supplemented the old thinner style
with more braid-like patterns; and the present rage for
waist-cloths with many-coloured stripes in place of the old
wavy and dog's-tooth fashion. Then the girls are rallied
about the method in which they dress their hair—all of
them in the style just declared treasonable in the upper
country. Queen Supayalat has hit upon some particular
set, or plaiting of her tresses, which she thinks becomes her
very well, and a royal order has come out making it penal
for any meaner damsels to adopt the same method. Consequently
all the maidens from Taungoo to Kyauk-Hpyu and
the A-eng Pass to Malawun have made up after the queenly
model and flatter themselves that it is *chic*. There are [775]
always ghost stories at these gatherings, tales about the
three farmer brothers that were killed just after harvest time
three years ago, and now haunt the dense patch of swampy
jungle down by the creek as nat seins, and sometimes scare
the fishermen out of a night's work by the violent agitation
of the tree-tops on a still night; and then there is that old [754]
hag in the lone house at the far end of the village, who is
certainly a witch; it must have been she who gave the old
sikkè the tet, poor old man, and he a payā-tagā too, founder

ing two birds with one stone." Maung Tha Byaw said he 536
was going to worship at the Shwe Dagôn pagoda. He gave
a performance or two, and made several (Burmese) fortunes. 538
Hence the saying—

Payā lè pu yin
Leip u lè tu yin.

You go and worship and dig turtles' eggs.

Turtles' eggs for prayer
Reward the pious player.

Maung Tha Byaw was not only a good singer, but himself 522
wrote very good songs, and was particularly clever at coining
in phrases the wisdom of many with the wit of one. No
other "prince" has ever attained to his fame. Best known
among the clowns was Shwe Lôt Gyi, who had the knack of
making local jokes wherever he happened to be, and took
the fullest advantage of the scope which the language
afforded him in the way of punning. Just after the railway
from Rangoon to Prome was opened, Shwe Lôt Gyi was
performing in a piece where the prince and his servant, the
clown, wander away into the forest and fall into a state of
great destitution. The prince bewails his sad fate in a [533] ●
dolorous tedat (a tune appropriate to such lamentations), and
finishes by asking what they are to do. The lubyet replied,
"The English have just opened a railway here. You go and
trespass on it, and I'll lay information against you and get
the reward." The idea showed considerable acuteness in a
man who had never seen a railway before.

Among the "princesses" many youths have been noted 536
for the sweetness of their voice. The two best were Maung 533
Tha Zan and, running him very close, Maung Mu, both of 562
them, like Tha Byaw and the clown, Mandalay men. The
accuracy with which they imitated the female voice was
wonderful, the more so as every song abounds with trills and
turns which would expose the least roughness. Neither in
the recitative, the tremulous erotics, nor the doleful wailings
of the maiden for her absent lover, would the stranger ever
suspect the performer's sex.

The plays are performed during the day only in a few 536
and exceptional cases, such as the arrival of a great man,

536 who cannot stay over the night, or when a local feast,
limited in its time, occurs. The great and legitimate season
is the night, and frequently a play, especially a puppet play,
extends over six or seven successive nights. The majority
of the audience stay the whole time, from seven or eight
o'clock at night till sunrise. It is not, however, to be supposed
that they hear it all through. Abundance of mats
and rugs are brought, and not a few, after listening till
midnight or thereabouts, calmly curl themselves up to sleep,
and slumber away for two or three hours, heedless of the
braying of the horns and the crash of the cymbals only a
few yards off. Then they wake up and fall in with the
progress of the piece with as keen interest as if they had
263 heard every word of it. Most of the young people, however,
prime themselves with the anti-soporific le'hpet, "pickled
tea," as the English call it, and bid defiance to drowsiness.
This condiment is as regular a crown to a Burmese dinner
as cheese is to an English one, and with the same idea,
possibly erroneous in both cases, that it promotes digestion.
[563] It is almost exclusively produced in Taungbaing, in the
[438] Shan country, by a hill tribe called Rumai, better known by
the Burmese name of Palaungs. The Burmese mix with it
salt, garlic, and assafœtida, douse it in oil, and add a few
grains of millet seed. The leaves forming the basis are the
leaves of an actual tree as distinguished from the bushes of
China and Assam. Hooker called it *Elæodendron orientale*,
while Anderson asserted that it was really *E. persicum*. Of
late years Assam planters have bought Taungbaing seed
for their gardens. One of the grievances which Englishmen
have when they attend a pwè is that they are always induced
by their host to take pickled tea, and perceive in it nothing
but the overpowering horrors of the assafœtida. Pwès and
assafœtida are therefore associated with one another to the
detriment of both.

533 Few foreigners can detect one tune from another, or the
recitative from any one of them. Consequently most declare
there is only one tune, or no tune at all, according to the
capacity of generosity in them. The same thing has been
said by an inappreciative Burman of the "vipers" of the
Royal Scots Fusiliers. He admired the conscientiousness

and pertinacity with which they defied the mosquitoes under 533
the shade of the trees, and droned away on their pipes all
through a tight-tunicked and perspiring Rangoon afternoon
garden party, as the observant Burman imagined, at one
endless tune. The national music is not written down, and
each actor has a variation of his own, but the smallest girl
in the audience would detect a kayāthan from a dobatthan
with as much readiness as any English boy would dis-
tinguish "Drops o' Brandy" from the "Old Hundred"!
But there are some people who do not like the Italian opera,
and even say so.

The following short outline of the *Zawtagômma pyazat* 536
will give an idea of the style of the more popular drama, as 539
distinguished from the purely religious birth-story. The
writer was an old player himself. He lived at Pegu, and the
Zawtagômma was perhaps his most successful effort. The
text has been published at one of the vernacular presses in
Rangoon, and the sketch given is a translation of the Zat-
lan, the "path of the play," prefixed by the editor. "In the
country of Pyinyawwada, of which Yazôtta was the sovereign,
the name of the Southern Queen was Thunemadewi, and
that of the Northern Queen Thukethidewi. The Queen of
the Southern Palace was about to bear a child, and the
king issued an order that her majesty of the North should
attend on her. This was very irritating to the Northern
Queen, and she resolved to ruin Thunemadewi, and for that
purpose conspired with Shin Gwe Ni, the midwife. As soon
as the child was born it was to be killed, and set afloat on
the river in an earthen pot, and the *accoucheuse* was to say
the Head Queen had been delivered of a still-born baby.
A twin son and daughter were born, and Shin Gwe Ni put
each of them in a jar and launched them on the river, and
went and told the king that they were still-born. Yazôtta,
the king, was very angry, and punished his consort by setting
her to dig the ground and carry water for the palace. The [643]
Queen of the North was promoted to be Head Queen, and [582]
her daughter, Pyinsarupa, was made tabin-daing (*i.e.* she
was set apart as wife for the next king, and not allowed to
marry).

"With regard to the bodies of the prince and princess

536 539 her go. Everything happened as he had foretold. She met the prince and he followed her advice. They returned to the Pyinyawwada country, and all was happy."

536 The above is the merest outline of the story. The piece is very long, and there is abundance of incident. The prince's servant, and usually also the two holy men, do the comic part of the business, but this is always so purely personal a matter that the printed text can give no real notion of what actually is said. It serves merely to point out the lines which the lubyet must follow in his impersonation. The stage books, written on palm-leaf, contain but very few detailed speeches, and merely indicate the story, and throw out hints to the actors. The following is one of the songs sung by the prince in his wanderings through the
● 533 forest in quest of Palèthwè. It is written to the tune of the "Chase in the Tawmawyôn Forest," that in which the king
[775] goes to hunt in the epic of the Ramayana. The wut or wutdaw referred to is the penalty of suffering the same punishment, or death, which has in a former existence been wrongfully or needlessly inflicted on others. Thus the great minister, Widuya, spoken of, who was an avatar of the Lord Buddha, had in a previous life dragged a frog by the leg so that it died. Hence he is dragged at the tail of the fierce Nat's horse until he dies himself. The prince fears that some such evil destiny is working itself out on him. The jingle of the rhythm is intended. The whole play is of the "raging rocks and shivering shocks" pattern.

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FATE

The wind breathes chill
Across the rill
That cuts the forest track;
The haze to mist
Whitens, I wist,
And I am lost, alack.

The branches spread
Dull green and red
Flat o'er the sullen stream;
Comes through the gloom
The gibbon's boom,
And shrill the parrot's scream.

535 the most promising of the youth of both sexes are taken in charge by a skilled sayā, who trains them assiduously
535 together until they have attained perfection. Even in these
562 dances the sexes do not mingle. There are meimma yein and yaukya yein, the former usually eschewing complex movements, and sitting in rows on the ground, richly decked with bracelets, and dalizan necklaces falling over their silken vests or tight-fitting lace bodices. The dancing consists of the usual pirouetting, or perhaps it ought to be called winding, on both feet, with much serpentine movements of the arms and the head. The loosening of the elbow-joint is greatly practised by Burmese girls with a view to these performances, and also under the impression that it is elegant in itself. From early years the arm is so manipulated that the forearm can be bent back so as to form a curve outwards, and this accomplishment is steadily exhibited on all occasions in public by a belle who has acquired it. Very often the meimma yein is performed by a body of girls, who succeed one another in successive groups. All are seated at first. The chorus is led by a woman, who herself does not dance, and is usually the instructress of the troupe. She begins in a low recitative gradually swelling until at last the first group rise and go through a stately performance. They are succeeded by the next row, who are more lively in their movements, and so on to the last, who are usually young girls, and are much more rapid and varied in their figures than their elder predecessors. Finally, all join in some complicated evolutions, and finish up seated in some pre-arranged figure. But as a rule the meimma yeins, though pretty enough as a mere spectacle, have not sufficient action to redeem them from the accusation of tiresome sameness brought against individual dancing, and they are always so discreet that they might be performed by Sunday-school teachers.

535 In the men's dances it is different. At the commence-
562 ment all are seated, four or five in the front row, and forming
● 533 a column of perhaps ten or more rows. The conductor gives the sign and all bow down with closed hands raised to the forehead in salutation to the great man in whose honour the dance is given. Then they be[illegible]n singing in

chorus in the usual way. The song treats in a rambling 535
way of the past history of the village, its ancient glories and 562
heroes; its victories in boat-races, boxing matches, or mains 533 ●
of cocks. Interpolated are catch phrases for the guidance of the dancers. At a certain word all spring to their feet; they sway to the right, to the left; white handkerchiefs are drawn from the belt and waved to the measure of the refrain, peeled white wands replace them; they pirouette simultaneously, they troop round in procession in movements resembling figures in the Lancers or the Haymakers, the time varying with the measure of the song, dying away in plaintive sounds almost to quiescence, and then suddenly rising to excited movement of every limb as the words tell of a let-pwè, in which some local hero of the fancy did glorious deeds, or a fight long years ago when the village spearmen carried the day. Then the measure changes again, the alterations in time being always heralded by some such refrain as to yein daw tha, le maung yo wa, a kind of warning hung out after the manner of the first word of a military command.
Occasionally, a yein troupe which has acquired particular 535
skill and renown travels about the country on special invitation. Rangoon is often supplied with its "country dances" in this way, the townspeople not having the time, or being
too numerous to form a good company for themselves. But [463]
they very rarely become regular professionals in the same way as the play actors do; they never perform ostensibly to gain a living, and the dances always occur on some fête day, whether in their own place or in the village to which they have been invited. Their instructor always receives a sum of money to recompense him for his trouble and to pay for the expenses of his troupe. Yein pwès are performed ordinarily in private houses or on a public platform, when it is a religious or special festival. A yein is a favourite way of greeting a great man, or an English official on his arrival in a village. It is not so expensive as a zat pwè, is more quickly arranged, allows the sons and daughters of the chief people to distinguish themselves, and lasts just as long as the person it is intended to honour pleases.

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

CHAPTER XXXI

MUSIC AND SONGS

● 533 THERE are no teachers of music or singing in Burma, and there are no written scores. A musician commences his career by diligently listening to the performance of a good band. By and by he enters the village orchestra as a clapper player, and so learns the time and the peculiarities of various tunes, just as actors rise from the posturing and choruses of the children's and country yein pwès to the full dignity of dramatic performers. As a natural consequence there are occasionally variations, and indeed every pulwè, or flute-player, has his own particular mannerisms, but these are never so great as to materially alter the character of the air, and such tunes as the tedat, apudaik, lôngyin, and so forth, which occur in every zăt, are as familiar to everybody as "God save the King" and "Auld Lang Syne" are to an Englishman. Nevertheless it is very difficult for a foreigner to catch the air, and I have not been able to get an English score of any of the really old national tunes. The melody
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177·53
given later on was taken down from the playing of a well-known pwè leader in Maulmein, and has been harmonised for the town brass band by Mr. W. G. St. Clair, formerly of that place, to whom I am indebted for the score. So true is it to the air that many wealthy Burmans have the band to play at domestic festivals, funerals, and the like, and are satisfied to have the one tune played over and over again a score of times. But the kayāthan is of modern origin, and, as Burmans always say, in the English style, though Englishmen will persist in saying that there is nothing English about it. It has somewhat absurdly been adopted by the

British army as "The Burmese National Anthem." It makes not at all a bad quick march, but it is about as appropriate for a national anthem as "Champagne Charlie is my name." In the acknowledged national airs it is very difficult to get a definite rhythm, the music being apparently, at any rate to all but experts, a mere succession of recitative, more or less Wagnerian in its style. 533 ● 177·53

534 The instruments of a full Burmese band always include the following, whether the occasion is the orchestra for a play, the music for a dance, for a wedding, an ear-boring ceremony, or a funeral. A saing-waing, an elaborately carved, circular, wooden frame, painted in parts, standing between two and three feet high, and five feet or more in diameter. Round the inside of this are hung drums of graduated sizes, which are struck with the hands of the performer, who sits in the middle. The alternate dry and saturated state of the atmosphere renders constant tuning necessary, and this is effected by tightening the drum-heads, and also by smearing on with the fingers a paste made of burnt rice husk. The music produced is rather thin in itself, but by no means unpleasing. Similar to it in construction, but not standing so high, is the kyi-waing, the only difference being that graduated gongs take the place of the drums. The gongs are of course beaten with a knobbed stick, and not with the hand. These ponderous instruments can only be carried about in a cart, and their owner keeps perpetual guard over them, sitting in the centre, cheroot in mouth, for they cost a very considerable sum of money. Fair specimens of both the drum and the gong-harmonicon may be seen in the South Kensington Museum. In addition to these, there are in every band two or three hnè, trumpets or clarionets, with a broad bell-shaped mouth, which is movable and ordinarily but loosely attached. The noise of these is always very prominent, and is not relished by people who do not care for the bagpipes. There is also a similar number of pulwè, or pyue, a rude kind of flute. The best pulwè-player is always the leader of the band. Then there are ya-gwin, big cymbals, and than-lwin, little cymbals, and the patma, a long drum like the tom-tom of India and beaten with the hand in the same way. Finally there are the wa le'kôt, each formed of

are used to strike them with. The notes produced are 534
surprisingly clear and melodious.

Fiddles may often be heard played with greater or less 177·53
skill, especially on the pagoda steps by blind and deformed beggars, but the instrument is not national, and is never, or but rarely, found where Europeans have not penetrated. The same may be said of the young Burmans who play in Rangoon on the concertina and the English fife and piccolo. It is flattering to national pride to notice with what accuracy and rapidity they pick up English airs.

But except at funerals and other solemn occasions in- 533 ●
strumental music is looked upon not so much as a means of enjoyment in itself as an accompaniment to the human voice, and mere orchestral concerts would never draw the crowds which a single good singer can always command. The recitative character of the music is always more evident in the singing than in the instruments, and each "prince" or "princess" has individual peculiarities in the way of trills and staccatos introduced into the legitimate air. As the young musician learns by hanging about the band, so a vocalist follows an acknowledged great singer about and imitates his style, or at any rate learns the tunes and the words. The latter are, however, very immaterial, for the language itself is so pliant that it is easy to express the ideas in rhythm as you go on. Maung Tha Byaw, the great singer of his day, always made his songs as he sung them, and this was so well known that whenever he appeared, whether in a regular play or only to sing a few airs, there were always thirty or forty reporters sitting round to take down his words in their parabaik. This peculiarity
of the Thabinwun occasionally got him into trouble. A [644]
somewhat incomprehensible piece of palace etiquette rendered it treasonable to sing a thanzan, a new song, before the king. Maung Tha Byaw several times, whether through too great laziness to learn the words, or from the force of habit, transgressed this rule, and was several times ordered out to execution. But he sang to the taunghmu and the pagwet, and these grim customers, the gaoler and the executioner, unable to resist the melody of this latter-day Orpheus, hid him away and exhibited some less talented

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● 533 person's body in evidence of having carried out their orders. Then when the next palace concert came on, the king—his late majesty—would grow tired of the ordinary vocalists and regret that the great improvisatore was gone. Whereupon Maung Tha Byaw would promptly come forth and sing his sweetest. He was killed in this way several times, but in the end died a natural death, about the same time as his contemporary Yindaw Ma Le.

533 554 The honours he received were quite on a par with European estimation of musical talent. He had a patent to carry a golden umbrella, and, as Thabinwun, had magisterial powers to punish those who offended him or refused to obey his edicts. Two lictors went before him to clear the way, a white cloth being tied round their fasces as a distinctive mark. When he performed in a play a low yaza mat, or royal fence, extended across the front of the stage, and at the ends were planted his golden hti and a banana-tree. The latter distinction was also granted to Maung Tha Zan and Maung Mu, singers only inferior to the Thabinwun himself.

533 177.53 538 If the tunes are not easily reduced to regular rules, the difficulty with the metres is not less. There exist, indeed, written laws ordaining the number of feet to the verse, but they are as lightly regarded as is consistent with their recognition at all. Much more precision is indeed expected in the old tunes than in those of modern date, but even with them song-writers of the present time allow themselves considerable freedom. The original linga are all very short. Thus the pyo has but four syllables; kabya, four; yatu, six and four; luta, four; yagan, six and four; ègyin, four, five, and six; hmawlôn, four and six; paikzôn, four; legyo, four; sagyin, four, five, and six; and so forth. In the thanzan, or new tunes, however, the compass of the lines often approaches the portentous length of some of Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*. Such modern tunes are the kayāthan (so-called English), dobatthan, nabethan, nanthein yodaya (Siamese), and pyigyithan (Chinese). Such compositions
533 538 as the lôngyin and ngogyin cannot be designated otherwise than as musical prose, with occasional fits of metre, prompted by their dolorous character. They are the

threnodies and the laments of *divorcées*, unhappily all too common (in plays and song-books). Such, too, are the saungbasa, the ardent epistles of separated sweethearts. 533 ● 538

The question of rhyme is even more puzzling. Some compositions not intended to be sung, such as notably the sèhnityathi bwè, songs about the twelve months of the year, giving an account of their characteristics, the pwès that take place in them, and so on, are written with regular final rhymes, while the other laws of prosody, shi'-lôn tabaik, kolôn tabaik, and so forth, are fairly strictly observed. But in the songs of the plays and such-like productions, rhyme runs absolute riot, so that it is quite common for every word in a line to rhyme with the corresponding word in the second verse of the couplet.

Thus in the kayāthan, translated below, there are abundance of lines like the following:—

Thuza lo lo
Muya po po.

Or—

Ma yo le hnan kyauk
A-po le tan lauk.

Or in the Tedat—

Ta ko dè pa
Ma so bè hma
Á ngo thè hla.

Such rhymes occur in an abundance that makes them the most prominent characteristic of the verse, but it is impossible to reproduce them except in another monosyllabic language. English, of all others, offers the greatest difficulties to the translator.

I have done what is possible to reproduce the following kayāthan, "The Sound of the Trumpet,"[1] as nearly as possible in the varying metre of the original. Those who are best able to judge of the success of the attempt will be the most lenient in their criticism. I may mention that the tune was originally composed to the words of a song in honour of the accession of King Thibaw, but words on all manner of subjects have been written to it since.

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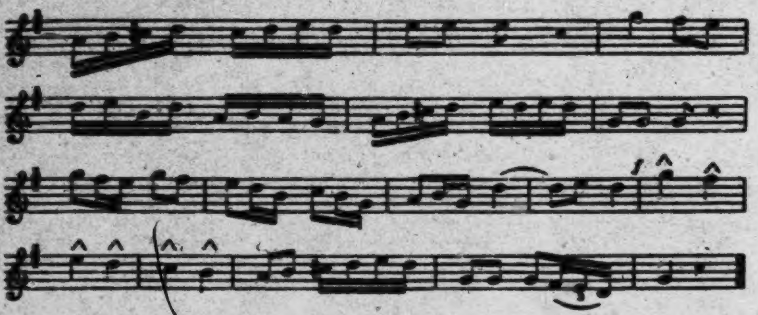
[1] [see category 539, pp. 322-323--ANALYST] -Y



539

533 ● Next to the "Sound of the Trumpet" the Dobatthan is probably the most popular air, and is certainly the next most familiar to the English ear. It may be called the refrain-song, and is remarkable for the long dwelling and trilling on the last note of each stanza. The do is the seed with which aim is taken in the game of gônnyinhto, and pat, or bat, is to twist or spin. The metre here is not so complicated :— 539

SERENADE

Love united,
Troth so fondly plighted,
Love's light with life first lighted.
Sigh, my dear,
In me here,
Long with fear,
Now thou'rt near;
Long and sigh, my dear.

Flew the storm-cloud,
Rose and shrieked the winds loud
Came I yet and lowly bowed.
Cold as lead
Here I sped,
For love dead
Bent my head,
Lonesome for love dead.

The thein-nats play,
See through wild rain I stray,
Drenched, but sad from thee away:
Sad and lone.
Sweet, my own,
Be not stone,
Hear me moan,
Sweet love, hear my moan.

ment as possible, to stimulate the thein-nats to exert themselves also. A lônswèthi sometimes continues for nearly an hour without definite result. 773 789

The "painted cheeks," or "fragrant cheeks," so frequently mentioned in all these love-songs, refers to the thana'kha, a sweet-scented, straw-coloured powder made from the bark and roots of the *Murraya paniculata*, a flowering shrub of the citron species. Some girls, and especially some actresses, have particular recipes for making up the cosmetic into a moist paste. It is applied with the finger, and a good deal of skill is exhibited in putting on the requisite amount. Unpractised hands usually smear on far too much, and it is as unsightly as a badly whitewashed outhouse. On others it is barely visible. All girls use it, and not a few town dandies. 303

The following may be regarded as somewhat of an approach to the European *vers de société*. I have not attempted to imitate the original metre :— 533 ●

THE CIGAR-MAIDEN OF MADEYA, NEAR MANDALAY 539

Thy cheroots, so deftly fingered,
Famous are in Burma's land,
Many a chief has fondly lingered,
Watched the maiden's nimble hand.

Madeya, I'd spare to sing thee
For cheroots and dainty maids,
For their crispness doth but bring thee
Sorrow from the palace blades.

By the throne's great gilded grandeur
Sits the prince, cheroot in hand,
And behind him little Ma Nyo,
Pearl of all the village band.

Burnt up all my love and sighing,
Like the ash of his cigar;
Hopes dispelled and idly flying,
Like the smoke he puffs afar.

Thy cheroots so deftly fingered,
Madeya are silver-white,
But the prince that came and lingered,
Stole away the hamlet's light.

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the umbrella-bearer, or, perhaps, two or three of them if the 701 officer had attained such distinction. 714

The actual civilian commander of the regiment seldom came out to the review, so that there were comparatively few gold umbrellas, but the red and green military sun-shades, with deep fringes, added perhaps more to the brilliance of the array, considered simply as a spectacle. Behind the hti-bearers came the minor officers, mounted on ponies, with the ordinary Burmese scarlet cloth saddle and tassels sweeping [492] over the animal's flanks. Each of these minor chiefs also had his umbrella borne over his head, and a score or two of spearmen guarded the flanks of the cavalcade. Mingled up among them was a confused crowd of cheroot-bearers, spittoon-holders, betel-box carriers, and similar functionaries such as accompany a Burmese grandee wherever he goes. Behind this motley assemblage came the regimental colours. These were bifurcated red pennants, burgees bearing the number of the battalion, and leogryphs, lions, dogs, dragons, and similar distinguishing emblems for the different regiments. The standard was not very ponderous, but occasionally the bearer—he was not an officer—got tired of carrying it over his shoulder and lowered it to the trail without seeming to injure any one's sense of congruity. He was followed by 704 the band, or a portion of it, for the musicians were scattered 533 ● in twos and threes all over the regiment, usually at the head of a company, but not by any means necessarily so. Burmese music is ordinarily far from soft and gentle. At a play the trumpets blare, and the gongs, cymbals, and clappers clash and jingle and rattle in truly inspiriting fashion. But no such spirit-stirring strains are considered necessary to rouse martial ardour. A military bandsman required no preliminary education. All he had to do was to tap, tap away in the most stolid and monotonous fashion on a kyinaung. This is a brass or bell-metal gong, about the size of a dessert plate with a small round boss in the centre. The sound is sweet, and they are pitched in different keys, but a low-country Burman is at a loss to divine their precise use. The sound does not travel far, and they are not beaten in any fixed time, besides that the ahmudan would not step to it if they were; so that if it were not for the dignity

704 of the thing, there might just as well have been no band at all.
533 But there they were, and they jingled away and stopped and began again in the most casual and independent possible way.

704
714 After all this came at last the ahmudan, King Thibaw's army of "immortals" in full array. They most assuredly had not a martial appearance, and there was not a semblance of discipline among them. It was just possible to make out that they were marching in column. Here and there was a ragged resemblance to an alignment of fours, achieved for a few minutes apparently more by chance than anything else. The soldiers were very gorgeous. Peony roses and sunflowers were as nothing to them. All had red tunics, but the facings, which were broad, were different in each regiment. Some were yellow, some green, some blue, some nondescript, and the effect on the red ground was not always pleasing. The trousers were very various. Blue, with a broad yellow stripe down the side, or occasionally for the sake of variety down the front or the back, green and red, yellow and maroon, scarlet and brown, were a few of the combinations. On their heads were worn helmets with burnished spikes, and a small metal dragon in front. These helmets do not suit at all with long hair. The topknot of a good many is so large that the *pickelhaube* balances on it, and wobbles about in undignified fashion.

The majority, however, found that the most satisfactory way of avoiding this was to put the helmet on the back of the head, which imparted to them a dissipated appearance, which was far from martial-looking. Not a few found the difference in weight between their ordinary silk turban and a papier-mâché or plaited wicker helmet more than they could bear, and solved the difficulty by carrying their headpiece on the end of their carbines. This met with no remonstrance or opposition on the part of the non-commissioned officers, who, armed with spears, marched at irregular intervals along the flanks of the column. The soldiers had no belts, and therefore no scabbards, and proceeded with bayonets fixed. The Fourth Regiment, commanded by the young Kachin before alluded to, had a habit, whether for the sake of distinction, or as signifying that they were prepared at any moment to give cold steel, of sloping arms in an eccentric way. Grasping

764 525 178 heavy punishment under Burman rule. Latterly some laymen in Rangoon have even been bold enough to glorify the funerals of their relatives with keinnaya, figures of men or women with bird-like feet and lower extremities. These spangled toys, which are commonly to be seen in all monasteries, are properly only used at the last ceremonies of a member of the sacred order. But when some men are bold enough even to flaunt the royal white umbrella, it is hardly to be expected that the distinctive honours of the yahans would be respected.

764 [735] The procession having been formed, a start is made. At the head come the alms intended for the monks and for the poor, some carried by men, some by women, the sexes going in separate lines. After this come the pyin-sin, never in any very great numbers, unless the a-hlu be particularly bountiful. Following them comes the band, and often a troop of singers. These are always hired for the purpose, and their callousness is as little to be cast up against Burman natural affection as the unlovable doings of the mutes at an English funeral. Close upon the musicians comes the bier carried by six or eight young men. Then in a general crowd follow the relations, friends, and neighbours, all on foot. Many passers-by, total strangers, join in the procession from motives of piety. Here and there the men carrying the bier stop and dance in a curious fantastic way to the measures of [635] the dirge of the singers. The funeral *misereres* are usually the composition of an improvisatore in the chorus, and deal with the life and death and good actions of the deceased. A measure called maung pyaung is the most generally used.

Occasionally there is a tug-of-war with a rope as at a pôngyi's funeral, one side exclaiming, "We must bury our dead"; the other, "You shall not take away my friend." As a matter of necessity the former party must conquer, but they sometimes have to get recruits from the crowd before they can manage it.

764 823 It is a matter of regulation that a funeral should never go to the north or to the east. The graveyard is usually to the west of the village, and the dead should all be carried out of a walled town by a gate reserved for this purpose. In Mandalay this a-mingala tagā was that to the south-west,

764 present, were superintending the carrying off of the 108
643 (representing the number of divisions in the foot of the Lord
175 Buddha, and the beads on the rosary) heaps of alms piled up in great mountains in a long shed to the east of the mausoleum. This was the last of the pious king, Maung Lun, Mindôn Min, the Convener of the Fifth Great Synod.

●533
539 The following is the substance of a funeral dirge sung in Mandalay by a Rangoon man whose wife had died in the royal city:—

Gone, gone art thou, sweet wife; gone far away,
Fair still and charmful, stretched on thy cold bier,
As erst thou wert upon that joyous day
When first I wed thee; gladsome brought thee here,
And joyed to think that thou wert mine. . Ah me!
The butterfly's silk wings are shred; no more,
Ne'er more to rest upon thy head, Mah Meit—
Sweet name for wife: "affectionate." Deplore
Her death ye nats that rule forests and streams,
The hills and vales, and greater ye who guard
The sacred law, the holy shrines, the beams
Of silent moon, and sunlight baking hard
The hot-scorched earth, not scorchèd more and seared
Than is the parchment of my tortured heart.
Nay, bear with me, good neighbours. Be not feared.
I am not mad. The nat-so hath no part
Of me or mine. The spaewife sure hath said it.

Ay, thou wert mine when last I trod the earth,
Ere yet, all sinful, I was born as man,
And yet again, in yet another birth,
I'll claim thee; when mayhap a happier kan,
A fairer sum of merit, hardly won,
Will lead us on, linked-armed, to linkèd death,
That so progressing, joyful we may run
Through all life's changes, and with single breath,
Through heavens and zan and rupa, we may bound
To Ne'ban, blissful home of rest. So mote it be.

Alas, thou wert from Hanthawaddy's plains,
And were we there, where thou so fain hadst stayed,
A stately pomp had honoured thy remains,
In silk and velvet wound, with gilded shade
Of wide umbrella's pride, and regal spire
Had towered to the skies, all seemly draped
With flowing cloths and princesses' attire,
Such as now thou dost wear, from earth escaped

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
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To heavens of nats. Yea, and of fretted gold 533
With mirror-work inlaid had been this case, 537
The last sad dwelling of thy earthly mould;
But here it may not be, not in this place.

In Mamye's soil the stranger finds a tomb
As poor as doth the meanest in the land.
The trumpet's wailing note, the drum's low boom
May not be heard; all callous as the strand
That threats the sailor on a stormy night,
The law stands fast and bids the mourner pass
With smothered moan; and hurry from its sight
The alien clay. Far from thy home, alas!
Thy dirge e'en waxeth faint. Oh, Awgata,
The Lord, the Law, the Order, the Three Gems,
I bow me low. Grant me the holy calm.

[Pg. 602 is blank]

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(337)

BURMESE MUSIC.

(*A Preliminary Enquiry*).

> "Just at the moment, when western civilization is beginning to realise that oriental music is something better than the barbaric noise it has long thought it to be, the oriental nations are in grave danger of losing interest in it, and as it has been conveyed from generation to generation not by the arts of writing and printing, but orally, so soon as that interest is gone the art itself, unless special measures are taken, will have entirely evaporated—that is, will be forever un-recoverable. One would wish East and West to study one another's music, whilst pursuing independent courses in their own, but that seems to be impossible." 000
>
> PERCY A. SCHOLES,
> *Oxford Companion to Music, p. 672,*
> *O. U. P. 1938.*

Part I. Classics, Legend and History.

Burmese music is a virgin field for research. Nobody can bewail this virginity more than myself. To help me there does not seem to exist a single western work on Burmese music though there are such classics as Fox Strangways' on Indian and J. H. Levis' on Chinese music. Many writers on Burma have passed remarks, kind or humorous, on Burmese music. But few have attempted a technical study of it. Nothing Burmese escaped the notice of Sir James George Scott of course. But I know of only two who left some technical remarks on Burmese music: Paul Edmonds, the author of *Peacocks and Pagodas*; and P. A. Mariano, in an appendix on Burmese music to that most lovingly produced book *Burma* by Max and Bertha Ferrars. I shall discuss the observations of both by and by[1]. I draw attention to this paucity of reference material to prove that I cannot be well informed and therefore cannot speak with authority on the subject. 114 533

It is fitting to begin with a translation of what has already been written on Burmese music in the Burmese language. If it is unscientific it is at least what the Burmese have to say about it. And I shall be lacking in veneration for the Burmese classics if I neglect the following extracts. They are published in U San Win's admirable effort to preserve Burmese classical tunes in his specially invented system of notation, entitled *Burmese Music Notes* Book No. 1. [illegible] I must draw public attention to this and a second book which came out recently; because, in spite of their naivety in the technique of notation, they nevertheless mark the beginnings of a systematisation of Burmese music by a Burmese lover of music. It is a labour of love; and

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[1] In 1939 appeared *Die Musik Birmas* by Kurt Reinhard. But it is an ethnological work on the music of Burma and what recognizable Burmese music there is in it is taken from Mariano.

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114 ●533 very considerable the labour must have been. Experts in western notation who may be disposed to smile at the *Burmese Music Notes* will realise notwithstanding that here at last are the authentic classical tunes of the Burmese put on record in black and white, ready, and if desired, easy enough to be transcribed into western notation after a perusal of this article and its supplement 'The writing of Burmese music.'

534 114 In the second book of U San Win is appended most valuable and authentic information on the fundamentals of Burmese music, such as, the tuning of the Burmese harp (စောင်းကောက်), its history; the tuning of the drum-circle (ဆိုင်းဝိုင်း); the gong-circle (ကြေးနောင်ဝိုင်း); the နှဲ *Hnè* (Burmese oboe), big and small; and the succession of Burmese keys. The word 'key' will arouse sudden interest. It will become very interesting indeed in due course. To begin with the classics:—

533 773 "*Preface* :—From the beginning of the world, during the sovereignty of the first President King the five principal sounds of brass, string, percussion, wind and clapper, had been employed in music in ceremonies of sprinkling the holy water all over the world.

"Three hundred years before Buddha's Enlightenment, when, to avoid the enmity of Pañcala Rājā, the Sakya kings of Kapilavatthu, Devadaha and Koliya left the middle regions (Majjhimadesa) and founded the Tagaung kingdom of Sankassaraṭṭha, the same five kinds of instruments were wont to supply music for auspicious Royal occasions and entertainments.

"Also, during the life-time of Lord Buddha, according to *Sakkapañha Sutta*, deva Pañcasikhā, the wearer of five top-knots, renowned the Lord in song playing the seven times seven (49) melodic figures of *gita pluta* on his celestial harp, which was said to be three-quarters of a *yojanā* (*i.e.*, about 2¼ miles)[1] in length, called Be[illegible]va-paṇḍu-viṇa.

"The Buddhist anchorite Nārada of the middle regions compiled the treatise *Nāradasikkhā* from musicology as known to all learned ones from the beginning. In it was mentioned the same seven times seven (49) melodic figures (*tāna*) and three times seven (21) modes (*mucchanā*) which are mentioned in *Sakkhapañha Sutta*.

"In the chronicle of Buddha are descriptions of how, when he was seated on the invincible throne Aparājita the devas came and paid homage with musical instruments; and how, on the occasion of His departure from their abode, Tāvatiṃsa to visit Sankassa Nagara, they followed in His wake proclaiming His excellence in music and song.

"After the death of Lord Buddha, too, in the history of the middle regions, the Buddhist nobility and gentry practised music on various instruments, classifying and utilising various kinds of sounds.

"In the history of our Buddhist country of Burma, music and musical instruments existed throughout the successive kingdoms of Tagaung, Srikhettara, Pagan, Myinsaing, Sagaing, Pinya, Ava, Konbaung, Amarapūra, down to Ratnapura Mandalay.

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[1] Authorities differ on the exact measurement of *Yojanā*.

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BURMESE MUSIC.

"Among all the kings of Burma, there was one King Thālun, during whose reign (1629-1648 A.D.) Minister U Aye compiled a treatise on Burmese music called *Naralèkha*[1] နရလေခ in which were included the 37 ritual songs. Later, in the reign of Bodawpaya (1782-1819 A.D.) this treatise was revised and enlarged by Myawadiwungyi U Sa. It was known to be printed in the royal press within the city in Mandalay. Apart from this no other Burmese work on Burmese music has been known to exist for all the fifty years and more after the British annexation (1885 A.D.). 533 173

"Because of this paucity of printed record, it was thought that music existed only in western countries and not in Burma. Not so. There is evidence in Buddhist literature that music has flourished in this country for a long time. Unfortunately, the theory and practice of music have not been put into writing. Instead, they were handed down from father to son by word of mouth and by hand-on-hand instruction, so that, human memory was the only repository of Burmese music......

"*Appendix—vide* Abhidhāna Nissaya: The music which Pañcasikhā (the wearer of five top-knots) made on his three-quarter-*yojana* long celestial harp Bheluva is composed of 7 (ground tones) *Svara*, 3 *Grāmas*, 21 *Mūrchanas* and 49 *tānas*, the total effect of which is known as *Sramaṇḍala*.

"Bulls produce the Usabha tone; horses, the Dhevata; peacocks, the Çadya; goats, Gandhāra; cranes, Majjhima; cuckoos Pañcama; and elephants Nisāda.

Grāmas are three: Çadya, Majjhima and Sādhāraṇa.

Therefore the above scale of seven tones played in three different positions, raised, lowered, or natural, produces the 21 varieties of sounds, which according to U Ba Choe in သံစဉ်(၇)ပါး အကြောင်း is the reason why twenty one is the number of drums in a drum-circle ဆိုင်းဝိုင်း, gongs in a gong-circle ကြေးနောင်ဝိုင်း and pieces of bamboo or iron in the ပတ္တလား *pattalar* the Burmese relative of the xylophone or the glockenspiel. 533 171

The above classical terms are explained authoritatively by Fox Strangways[2]: 533

GRĀMA (ဂါမ) the name has been applied specifically only to three scales—the Sa-grāma, our major with a sharpened Sixth; Ma-grāma, *our major C-c, but intended presumably to be used as an F-f scale*[3] with a sharpened Sixth; and the Ga-grāma, possibly intermediate between the two, long obsolete.

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[1] None of the works on music mentioned are available nowadays. U San Win has seen *Naralèkha* နရလေခ in parabaik form and informed me that he would try to trace the whereabouts of the present owner in response to my suggestion that this valuable document should find its usual resting place in the University Library. In an article on the 7 tones သံစဉ်(၇)ပါးအကြောင်း in ဂန္ထလောက Vol. 1, No. 3, 1936, U Ba Choe mentioned two more works *Nāṭyaśāstra* နာဋျသတ္ထ and *Māgheika* [illegible] of which only the former, a Sanskrit classic attributed to Bharata, is mentioned in the list of Sanskrit works on music in Fox Strangways' *Music of Hindostan*.

[2] Music of Hindostan, p. 106 *et seq.* It should be noted however that these terms, in spite of their Burmese annexation, apply, so far as Fox Strangways is concerned, to the music of Hindostan.

[3] The italics are mine. This statement seems to apply to the Burmese scale of *Hnyinlone* ညှင်းလုံး C-c, which has puzzled me for a long time because that class of songs ကြိုး၊ ဘွဲ့၊ သီချင်းခံ *Kyoh, Bwè Thachingan*, which I am sure have F as their tonic, are said to be played in the C-c scale. These words made me feel less puzzled. However, there are more puzzles to come concerning the Burmese scale.

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● 533 MORCHANĀ (မုစ္ဆနာ) means primarily the 'swelling of sound' and seems to have been applied originally to high and low pitch and to have meant the rise and fall of the voice in song. Then it came to have the technical sense of (1) a rise and fall from and to a particular note of a specific scale, and in this sense is accurately translated by 'mode'. But since the note on which they started was the most important and was generally ornamented with a grace note, *murchhana* (Hindustani) has come to mean (2) grace note as applied to a particular Rāg. In the old sense of the word the 'mode' consisted of seven notes, *i. e.* two tetrachords, so that *marçhhana* may (3) be held also to translate the Greek harmoniā (heptachord).

RĀGA (ရာဂ) means 'colour'; hence colour of mind, *i.e.* emotion. Its European analogue will therefore be whatever gives colour to a piece of music; and since this may be, according to circumstances, melody, harmony, counterpoint, or instrumentation, but most of all harmony, we have no real equivalent to a word which applies technically to melody... Its usual translation is 'melody-type' or 'melody-mould', or even 'tune'. If it must be translat[illegible]d, perhaps 'Mood' would convey as much as is compressible [illegible] word.

SAPTAKA (သတ္တက) a 'set of seven' takes the [illegible] of our word 'octave'; the *saptaka* contains seven *svaras*, *i.e.* n[illegible]es but intervals between them; and all Indian notations ass[illegible] three *saptakas*, a higher (*tara* တာရ) middle (*madhya* မဇ္ဈ) a[illegible] lower (*mandra* or *manda* မန္ဒ).

SVARA[1] (သရ) is also a degree of the scale, or the diatonic note. It may be natural (*suddha* သုဒ္ဓ) or chromatic (*Vikṛta* ဝိကတ). 'Natural' means not a 'white' note, but 'proper to the scale' whatever the scale may be. *Vikṛta* (ဝိကတ) notes are sharp (*tivra* တိဝြ) or flat *komala* (ကောမလ); very sharp *atitivra* or very flat (*atikomala*),

ÇRUTI သုတိ is the smallest audible sound. Like the *svara* it means both the interval and the note. The twenty-two *çrutis* have special names, and specific attributions of divine qualities lie no doubt concealed in these ... In assigning the *çrutis* then for *Sa-grama*.

Sa	Ri	Ga	Ma	Pa	Dha	Ni
4	3	2	4	4	3	2,

Indian theory is indicating the relative sizes of the major Tone (4) minor Tone (3) and Semitone (2) with accuracy sufficient for its purpose. The *Ma-grama* is formed from this by the interchange of the *çruti*-values of Pa and Dha "Dha takes one *çruti* from Pa"—thus[2]:

Sa	Ri	Ga	Ma	Pa	Dha	Ni
4	3	2	4	3	4	2

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[1] See comparative table of 7 classical tunes.

[2] This agrees with table U Ba Cho's table of the *çrutis* according to *Maghatika*.

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Table I. 391

As identified by U San Win on addendum to page 11, Burmese Music Notes, Book I.

Comparative Table of seven classical tones, assuming C is Doh.

	Sanskrit	Pāli	Animal Symbols	Terminology of the Burmese Harp	Ditto of the Burmese Band	
C	Çadja	ဆဇ္ဇ	peacock	ဒုရက Dūraka	၆-ပေါက်အောက်ပြန် Chaukpauk aukpyan	A
D	Rishabha	ဥသဘ	bull	ပြည်တော်ပြန် Pyélawbyan	သံလတ်အောက်ပြန် Thanlat aukpyan	G
E	Gāndhāra	ဂန္ဓာရ	goat	မြင်စိုင်း Myintsaing	ငါးပေါက်သံထိ Ngapauk thanhti	E
F	Madhyama	မဇ္ဈိမ	crane	ပုလဲ Pulè	သံဖျားတေ့ား ဆစ်ကြိုး Thanphyartayaw *or* Haitkyih	B
G	Pañcama	ပဉ္စမ	cuckoo	အောက်ပြန် Aukpyan	ဆစ်ကြိုးအောက်ပြန်၊ လေးပေါက် Haitkyih aukpyan *or* Lépauk	F
A	Dhaivata	ဓေဝတ	horse	ချောက်သွယ်ညွန့် Chaukthwènyunt	သံကြတ် Thankyat	D
B	Nishāda	နိသာဒ	elephant	ညှင်းလုံး Hnyinlone	သံယို၊ ၇-သံချီ Thanyoh *or* khunrathanchi	C

As identified by Fox Strangways on page 108, Music of Hindostan.

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533 VĀDI, SAMVĀDI, ANUVĀDI and VIVĀDI (Translated 'sonant' 'consonant' 'assonant' 'dissonant') [illegible] are survivals of a theory of consonance (*Samvaditva* [illegible]) now forgotten. *Samvādī* definitely means the consonance of Fourth and Fifth, as we should say 'Perfect consonance' *Vādī* is the note to which it is so related. *Vivādī* is applied by Bharata to the semitone. He speaks (verse 24) of notes being *vivādī* to one another when they are at the distance of twenty *çrutis*. This is the same thing as two *çrutis* (22-20) which reading actually appears in another manuscript. *Anuvādī* is the name for 'all other relations which are not *vādī*, *samvādī* or *vivādī*. These three relations belong to the tetrachord, and presumably *anuvādī* does too. Current tradition makes *anuvādī* the major Third. But Bharata says 'all other' (*çesha*), as if more than one relationship was *anuvādī*. If it is possible to suppose that in the term *anuvādī* he included the major and minor tones (which together make up the major Third) all the determining elements of Bharata's scale would be accounted for.

Fox Strangways has a chapter on legend and history too. I shall quote the legends in which the same well-known names recur.

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> "Once upon a time the great anchorite Nārada thought within himself he had mastered the whole art and science of music. To curb his pride the all-knowing Vishnu took him to visit the abode of the gods. They entered a spacious building the inmates of which were numerous men and women, who were all weeping over their broken limbs. Vishnu stopped short and enquired of them the reason for their lamentation. They answered that they were the Rāgs, and Rāginis of music, created by Mahādeva; but as one anchorite of the name of Nārada, ignorant of the true knowledge of music and unskilful in performance, had sung them recklessly, their features were distorted and their limbs broken, and that unless Mahādeva or some other discreet and skilful person would sing them properly, there was slender hope of their ever being restored to their former state of body. Nārada, ashamed, kneeled down before Vishnu and asked to be forgiven."

> "With Nārada, the R'shi who first 'heard' the laws of music, are associated Tumburu, the first singer, and Bharata, the first to draw up rules for the drama, of which music formed a large part. Of Tumburu it is said that he increased the scale in which the *Sāmaveda* was chanted from five notes to six or seven. The treatise which purports to record the doctrine of Nārada, the *Nāradaçiksha* [illegible] is probably of late date (1000 A D. ?) and gives no clue whatever to the achievement of the Nārada of legend. The treatise which bears the name of Bharata, the *Natyaçastra*, is similarly an eponym. One or other of these three names appears probably in every book on music that has been written, and the existence of the authors is held, though in complete absence of any specific doctrine attributed to them, as a pious belief.."

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Among the Burmans the instrument of Guttila of the famous legend is a harp. Apparently it is a *vinā*, according to Fox Strangways, "To the *vinā*, the national instrument, there are so many references both direct and allusive, that it is difficult to choose. Perhaps one story, from the Jatakas, will be enough:

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A feeble musician, Musila (မုသိလ) of Ujjeni, whose music on the *vina* was 'like scratching on a mat,' came to learn of Guttila (ဂုတ္တိလ) of Benares (the Bodhisatta). Guttila's parents when they heard him said "Shoo! Shoo! the rats are gnawing the *vina* to pieces'. Guttila who, as Bodhisatta, was 'skilled in discerning from the lineaments of the body' said 'Go my son, this art is not for you.' But Musila got his way; and Guttila, the Bodhisatta who did not stint his knowledge, at last pronounced his pupil perfect. Musila pressed to be taken into the king's service. This was done; but the king awarded Guttila twice as much as his pupil. Musila protested, and forced matters to a contest, of which proclamation was made to tuck of drum. The Bodhisatta reflected that he was old, and that 'if he beats me, death in the wood is better than the shame which will be my portion.' So to the woods he went; but 'kept returning through fear of death, and going back to the wood for fear of shame,' so that 'the grass died as he walked and his feet wore away a path.' In his trouble Sakka, the king of gods, appeared. Guttila was to break, in the contest, one string after another, beginning at the 'beestring' and the music should be as good as before. 'Then you shall go on playing with nothing but the body; and from the ends of the broken strings the sound shall go forth and fill all the land of Benares for the space of twelve leagues.' All happened as was foretold, and the scholar, beaten out of the field, was stoned and torn in pieces by the populace..." 533 773

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So far the classics: Yet it appears that in the music itself there is as much evidence (if not more) of Chinese and Siamese influence as there is of ancient Indian influence in literature. I hope these influences will receive the attention of researchers in Burmese history. 533 171

As far as I am aware the Chinese influence seems to be the oldest. An unspoilt Burmese ear will catch Chinese cadences in any extemporization on the black keys of the piano in the truly old Burmese style. But that is no evidence. I quote J. Kunst[1].

> "....This being granted, Prof. von Hornbostel has made a very important discovery, that the scales of very different civilisations and peoples are derived from this ancient Chinese cycle of blown fifths. All these scales are composed of a series of notes, ordinarily 5 or 7, which follow each other in the cycle in some kind of regular fashion.

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[1] *De l'Origine des Echelles Musicales Javano-Balinaises.* Conférence faite le 7 Janvier 1929 à l'Institut Colonial d'Amsterdam. In Journal of the Siam Society, Vol. XXIII, pt. 2, pp. 115-118. Translated by G. [114]

533 171 On learning this remarkable fact, one will feel no doubt inclined to say: 'Quite so, but since the cycle is formed in a logical fashion by the application of the phenomenon of harmonics, is it not possible that the construction might also have been discovered elsewhere than in China, quite independently; in other words is it not possible that it may have a multiple origin ?'

No doubt that would not be impossible in itself. But what is hardly believable is that not only should the structure of these scales be founded everywhere on the cycle of the blown fifths, but that all should start from the same fundamental note, that of the *houang tchoung* of 732 vibrations; which brings us back to the same conclusion that, not only the relative structure of the scale, but also the absolute pitch of the notes is the same in all cases considered. This circumstance eliminates the hypothesis of a series of coincidences; One is certainly dealing here with intercourse between people and people. For all we know, this intercourse may apply to the musical scales of prehistoric China, of Siam, of Burma, of Cambodia, to those of the African xylophones, of the pan-pipes of the Incas, to those of certain Melanesian, Polynesian and present-day Brazilian tribes. And it is intercourse of the same kind which one must concede, by virtue of the same arguments, to explain the Javano-Balinese scales, as we believe we have demonstrated by means of a number of measurements of sounds *De Toonkunst van Bali* II, Figures I-V and VII-XIX. It has been proved that the influence of the Chinese metrological basis, corresponding to the *houang tchong*—230 mm.—was used or is still used, everywhere independently of musical instruments and scales, in an enormous territory, stretching from Europe on the one side to South America on the other. Von Hornbostel, *Ueber einige Panpeifen aus Nordwest-brasilien* (in Th-Koch. Grunberg, *Zwei jahre unter den Indianern*), 1910; *id.*, *Ueber ein akustisches Kriterium fus Kulturzusammenhange* (in the *Zeitschrift fur Ethnologie*, 1911, p. 601 sqq.); *id.*, A brief summary of the theory of the blown fifths (in *Anthropos*, Vol. XIV/XV, p. 569-570), 1919-20; *id.*, An article treating with the metrical norm in the *Pater Schmidt Festschrift*, which will very soon appear. Recently appeared under the title *Die Massnorm als Kulturgeschichtliches Forschungsmittel.*

I hope those who are interested will be able to go farther into the matter with the works mentioned. I feel personally very much inclined to believe that the Burmese scale, whatever it may be now, was at the beginning founded on a pentatonic basis not very much different from the *kung*, *shang cho*, *tze*, *yui* of the ancient Chinese musicologists.

533 175 At this point I must draw the distinction between Burmese music as we know it and music which once existed in Burma now lost to us. Of the former the earliest mention was in connection with Mintra Shwehti's investment of Salin *circa* 1539 A.D. Of the latter the earliest mention was in the reign of Emperor Tê-tsung in 802 A. D. Mr. G. H. Luce says:

"In 791 K'o-lo-fêng's successor, I-mou-hsün, attacked the Mang tribes. At the request of Wei Kao, the Chinese governor of Hsi-ch'uan, he sent a troupe of musicians, including Pyu, which appeared at the T'ang court in 800. This led the Pyu king, Yung-ch'iang or K'un-mo-chang, to send in 801-2 a formal embassy to China *via* Nan-chao; it included his younger brother (or son)

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Sunandana, lord of the city of Sri, and also 35 musicians. Chinese texts give many details of the mission, and the *Hsin-t'ang-shu* in particular has a long description of Pyu music."[1] 533 175

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Yung-ch'iang also sent his younger brother, master of the city of Hsi-li-i, Shu-nan-t'o, to bring an offering of the music of their country. When they reached Ch'êng-tu, Wei Kao made a collection of their tunes, and considering their dances and musical instruments to be of unusual interest, he made pictures of them to send to Court. They have twenty-two instruments, made of eight different substances, to wit, metal, shell, string, bamboo, gourd, leather, ivory and horn: of metal, 2; of shell, 1; of string, 7; of bamboo, 2; of gourd, 2; of leather, 2; of ivory 1; and of horn, 2. They have four bells shaped like those of the Kucha players, three inches in circumference, with clappers fastened by leather. They sound them in time with the tune. They have two iron clappers, three inches and a half long, and two inches and a half wide, flat in front, but with leather handles at the back. These and the bells are decorated profusely with steamers of brocade. There are four conch-shells, the larrgest capable of holding about 1 pint (shêng). There are two flat harps; one is 10 ft. long and its belly is 7 inches wide. It has a phoenix-head with neck 2 ft. 5 in. long. The front is decorated with snake-skin. There are 14 strings. The tuning-pegs are on the neck, facing outwards towards the phoenix-head. The other flat harp has "branching pegs." 534 175

There are two lizard-head zithers. One of them is wholly in the shape of a lizard. It is 4 ft. long, and has four legs; the belly is hollowed out. The back and the front are decorated with lizard skin as far as the shoulder, which turns upward like that of the Chinese lute *Ch'in*. It is 7 in. broad; the belly is 8 in. broad, and the tail a foot or more long. On the roller in the empty space there is fixed a barrier upon which are stretched nine strings on each side, attached to eighteen pegs. The front of the other zither is decorated with various-coloured flowers; or as an alternative, covered with snake-skin. There is a dragon-head lute (*p'i-p'a*) which resembles those used by the people of Kucha, but the neck is more than 2 ft. 6 in. long, and the belly 6 in. broad. The dragons' head face each other. There are three tuning pegs and three bridges, with strings to correspond. Two of the pegs are on the neck and one on the throat. It has a cover shaped like a lion. There is also a cloud-head guitar shaped like the foregoing; but the face is decorated with snake-skin and the whole surface with ivory bolts. The head is shaped like clouds. On the top of the pegs are flowers shaped like the ideogram 品. The three strings, the cover inches above and four below (?). The belly is nowhere larger than the top. It is made with three layers of snake-skin tied on with blue ropes. When they put it down, they do not keep the drum-skin tied on. The sides are painted with pictures of P'iao musicians holding mouth-organs and drums. There are four small drums like our waist-drums in shape, 5 in. long, only 3½ in. broad at the head, stretched with snake-skin. They have ivory nails and other ornaments; they have no handles and are shaken to mark the beat of the music. The "introducers" hold them. There is an ivory mouth-organ, made by piercing a gourd right through. It is lacquered; then two elephant tusks are put in instead of bamboo pipes. Both tusks play the note *ku-hsien*. There is a three horn mouth-organ, also made by piercing a gourd and lacquering it over; it is fitted with three bull's horns, playing one of them *ku-hsien*, the other two *nan-lü*. The horns are sharpened at the bottom and stuck through the gourd. The handle and mouth-piece are both straight. There is a two-horn mouth-organ of similar construction, *ku-hsien*. The gourd-part is ornamented with coloured designs.

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[1] In "Burma down to the fall of Pagan" B.R.S.J. Vol. XXIX, pt. 3, 1939.

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The names of their twelve tunes are:—

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(i) "Buddha's Seal." In P'iao it is called *mu-t'o-mi*. The natives and Indians sing this song when they minister to the king.

(ii) "Praise of the *sāla* flower." In P'iao it is called *lung-mang-ti*. The natives make clothes of this flower, thinking that it purifies their bodies.

(iii) "The white dove." In P'iao it is called *ta-tu*. They admire the way in which the bird flies or stops, according to its fancy.

(iv) "The white crane's rambles." In P'iao it is called *su-man-ti-li*. It says that when it soars it touches the sky and when it walks, it steps sedately.

(v) "The fighting goat's victory." In P'iao it is called *lai-nai*. Once there was a man who saw two goats fighting on the sea-shore; the stronger thereafter saw the weaker one enter the mountains. The people of the time called it *lai-nai*, which means "the pomp of victory."

(vi) "The dragon-headed single lute." In P'iao it is called *mi-ssŭ-mi*. It has one string, but all the five notes complete: which signifies that a king of kings by his single virtue nourishes ten thousand countries.

(vii) "*Jhana* concentration." In P'iao it is called *ch'ĕ-lan-shih*. It tells how one who quits the world, becomes solitary and quiet.

533 175 The above seven songs, when sung or danced, all follow the *huang-chung-shang* mode.

(viii) "Sweet Sugarcane King." In P'iao it is called *o-ssŭ-lüo*. It says that Buddhists are as sweet as sugarcane, the flavour of which pleases everyone.

(ix) "Peacock King." In P'iao it is called *t'ao-t'ai*. It tells of the brilliance of its plumage.

(x) "The wild goose." It says that, flying or standing, these birds are always in pairs : so comrades must all forgather.

(xi) "Banquet Music." It is called in P'iao *lung-ts'ung-wang-mo*. It says that tunes of peace are excellent for banquets and meeting together.

(xii) "Washing care away." It is also called "the reed-organ dance." In P'iao it is called *hu-na*. It says that from tune to tune one washes away one's cares and anxieties and this song takes one's fancy.

The above seven tunes are in one or other of the scales of *huang-chung*; one is in *huang-chung shang* (the *i-yüeh* mode); one in *lin-chung shang* (the *hsiao-chih* mode).

The musicians all wear K'un-lun dress, covering their loins with red cotton cloth (*tieh-chao-hsia*) which they call *jung-man*. They wear *chao-hsia* across their shoulders; on their legs and arms they have golden, jewel-studded bracelets; they wear golden head-dresses and ear-rings. They use a string or sash to thread flowers in order to make a headdress. They use two hair-retainers decorated with down. Before the dance begins the "introducers" come forward and explain its meaning. The dance-movements follow the music. The number of dancers used is 2, 4, 6, 8 or 10. They all wear jewelled caps. When the tune is over, they bow. Their songs were translated at fifth hand.

The Emperor Tê Tsung made Shu-nan-t'o an Officer of the Stables *t'ai-p'u-ch'ing*), and sent him home. T'ang Tz'u, Governor of K'ai-chou, made an "Eulogy upon the event of the P'iao offering music," which he laid before the Throne.

* * * * *

533 171 175 One wishes that all this had not been lost so completely. Siamese influence is of course much more recent. There were two conquests of Ayudhya (ယိုးဒယား *Yodaya*); the 1st by Bayinnaung (1551-81 A.D.) and the second by Hsinbyushin (1763-76 A.D). The latter was the more important because the conqueror not only brought back enormous numbers of prisoners of war but managed to hold Siam in subjection for a few years. Mr. Stewart, writing on the Burmese stage[1] remarked "Entertainers of all sorts were

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[1] Journal of the Royal Society of Arts, Vol. LXXXVII. No. 4516. *The Burmese Stage*

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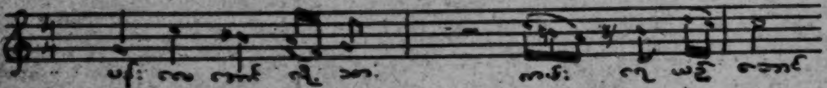
deported from the conquered country to Burma, and these included actors capable of performing dramas, of which the prime favourite in Siam was the Rama play.." He restricted himself to the stage only. What was true of the entertainers was true also of artists, craftsmen, musicians, sculptors, even games and confectionery. It was at that time that our cultural store-house was filled with Siamese loot. And at that time there lived a remarkable adaptor, creator and preserver of music, in the person of Myawadi-wungyi U Sa (1766-1853 A.D.) whose incredibly long life was filled with literary, dramatic and musical activity. There does not seem to be any kind of song which he has not written. Popular belief attributes to him no less than 200 *patpyos* ပတ်ပျိုး alone.[1] All the *patpyos* in *Enoung Zat* are his. Our most famous *Htumachana thachingan* [illegible] is his. Our present harp with 13 strings instead of 7 was also his. Our *Yodaya* ယိုးဒယား songs owe their establishment as a principal section in our classical repertoire entirely to the tireless adaptation into Burmese of every kind of *Yodaya* song he and his collaborator [illegible] could lay hands on. If the second conquest of Ayudhya was the single event, U Sa was the single person responsible for the energising of the body of our music by a liberal infusion of Siamese blood. Not content with adapting Siamese melodies, U Sa is reputed to have adapted certain slow measures of Christian sacred music [illegible] which he heard from early Roman Catholic missionaries in the beginning of his [illegible] ပတ်ပျိုး In another [illegible] notice the following phrase:

Ex. 17



He was already experimenting with the Western Leading-note. The first B at [illegible] is the flattish Burmese seventh, whereas the B's in the following bar at [illegible] and [illegible] are really the Western Leading-notes only a semi-tone distant from the Tonic. It is impossible to be certain, but it is highly probable that it was then that an advance from the pentatonic basis was achieved. For even as late as Bodawpaya (1782-1819 A.D.) according to the great harpist U Phoo Gaung, U Sa himself was still playing on a harp with only 7 strings, until his royal master asked him if he could not do better than that, when he fashioned the harp as we know it, with 13 strings and a gamut of nearly 3 octaves.[2]

Under the circumstances mentioned above it is inevitable that the Siamese scale too came to Burma, to stay. The question is whether the Burmese adopted the Siamese scale or adapted it to

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[1] In U Nu's [illegible] Sun Mag. July 1939.

[2] Although there are only 13 strings, the intermediate notes are obtained by 'stopping' the open strings with the tip of the fore-finger of the left hand.

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their needs. The only clues that can lead to an answer to this question exist in the chart *La Planche-I* appended to J. Kunst's article. The measurements of the Siamese scale were taken from Stumpf's '*Tonsystem und Musik der Siamesan*' p. 137; and the measurements of the Burmese scale, presumably the only scientific measurements ever taken, were from Von Hornbostel's *Ueber ein akustisches kriterium für Kulturzusammenhänge*, p. 613. The Siamese scale attracted also the attention of Prof. F. Max Mayer of the Missouri University, who, in his article *Musician's Arithmetic*[1] seemed fully convinced that the Siamese equal tempered 7-tone-scale and the Javanese equal tempered 5-tone-scale with the western chromatic scale were the only equal tempered scales in the world. Kunst, however, refuted that theory towards the end of his article in the Journal of the Siam Society:—

> "Sometimes it seems as though they meant to create an equigraded scale (5 x 240 C.), but most of the scales measured had one degree greater than the others. [Kunst's *De Toonkunst van Bali*, Vol. II, tables II, IV and V] in conformity with the hypothesis propounded above.
>
> "Furthermore, the famous tonal plan of the *pelet* is based—and the Sléndro too—on the particular position in the scale of intervals having different dimensions, in other words: an equigraded scale (of which one uses all the tones in one and the same composition, as always with the *Sléndro*), is, if I am not mistaken, incompatible with the pure nature of Javanese melody."

That disposed of the theory of the Javanese equal tempered 5-tone scale. Unfortunately, Kunst did not deal with the Siamese scale at all beyond supplying the measurements. And of these measurements, those of the Burmese scale by Hornbostel certainly look as though it was an equal tempered 7-tone scale. There was no sign of the existing sharpened Fourth.

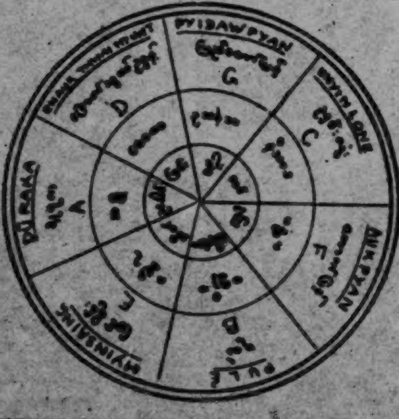

Diagram 1.

°Diagrams of changes of key prescribed by the classics go right round the octave in a succession of underfifths without such means as the black keys of the piano [*See* Diagram 1]. Indeed U Ba Choe mentioned, in his အသံစဉ်(၇)ပါး အကြောင်း one song (long forgotten), a *kyoh* [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] which modulates (?) into all the 7 keys.[2]

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[1] University of Missouri Studies, Vol. IV, 1929.

[2] U Ba Choe has rediscovered it, and when we investigated its changes of key on the piano, we found that it went the round of 12 keys; C—F—B flat—so on, back to C major.

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If ever true modulation into all the 7 keys were possible, it must have been at the time of U Sa, employing some such scale as Hornbostel's *echelle birmane*. Was the Burmese scale pentatonic in origin? Did it adapt itself to an equal tempered seven-tone scale from Siam towards the end of the 18th century? Did the intervals then become less and less equal until they nearly approximated to the Chinese scale of Mr. K. C. Hsiao, presently to be quoted, with an indeterminate Fourth and Seventh? How did this indeterminate Fourth and Seventh come about? These are questions to be settled by future more competent research. I shall however quote the very significant remarks of K. C. Hsiao on the present day Chinese scale.[1] 533 171 175

"....The true cause seems to lie in the incorrect intonation of modern Chinese instruments, incorrect in the sense that the intonation has deviated from the theoretical intention of the scale construction.

Let us take up the keyless-flute and find out what sort of scale it produces. This flute is virtually the standard pitch pipe[2] of the Chinese ensemble...... By careful experiment it has been found that the fourth and the seventh of the scale thereon are both "neutral," that is, the fourth is neither a half-tone above the third as in the European diatonic major scale, nor a full tone above it as in the theoretical Chinese heptatonic scale, but is just about mid-way between the third and the fifth, and the seventh is similarly mid-way between the sixth and the octave. It becomes at once clear why Chinese instruments sound impersonal or neutral or out of tune ....

The true reason for the incorrect intonation of the existing Chinese instruments cannot be stated with absolute certainty. The most probable reason is this: During the Yuan dynasty both the neutral and sharp F were used......But the production of both these chromatic tones could not be done on the flute except with the assistance of special key devices unknown to the Chinese instrument makers or with boring the second and fifth holes counting from the lower end, larger than the rest. It was possible at that time when both f and f-sharp were in use to bore the holes on the Chinese flute so as to enable the player to produce the notes when desired by a definite system of fingering such as now used by western fife players. But with the coming of the Ming dynasty, this whole system transgressing the pentatonic scale was officially abolished.

Musicians then and therefore did not have to bother at all about producing f and f-sharp, and following the law of supply and demand, the flute makers undertook to make flutes that could not produce either f or f-sharp accurately, *but had more uniformity and symmetry in their appearance by boring all the finger holes of the same size and with a minimum variation of distances from each other*[3]........If a player who had bought the flute cared to produce all the tones on the instrument, what he got was naturally a scale with neutral fourth and seventh, agreeing neither with the European diatonic (with the perfect), nor the Chinese heptatonic scale (with the augmented fourth). The same thing was then applied to the playing of stringed instruments......to be in tune with the wind instruments.

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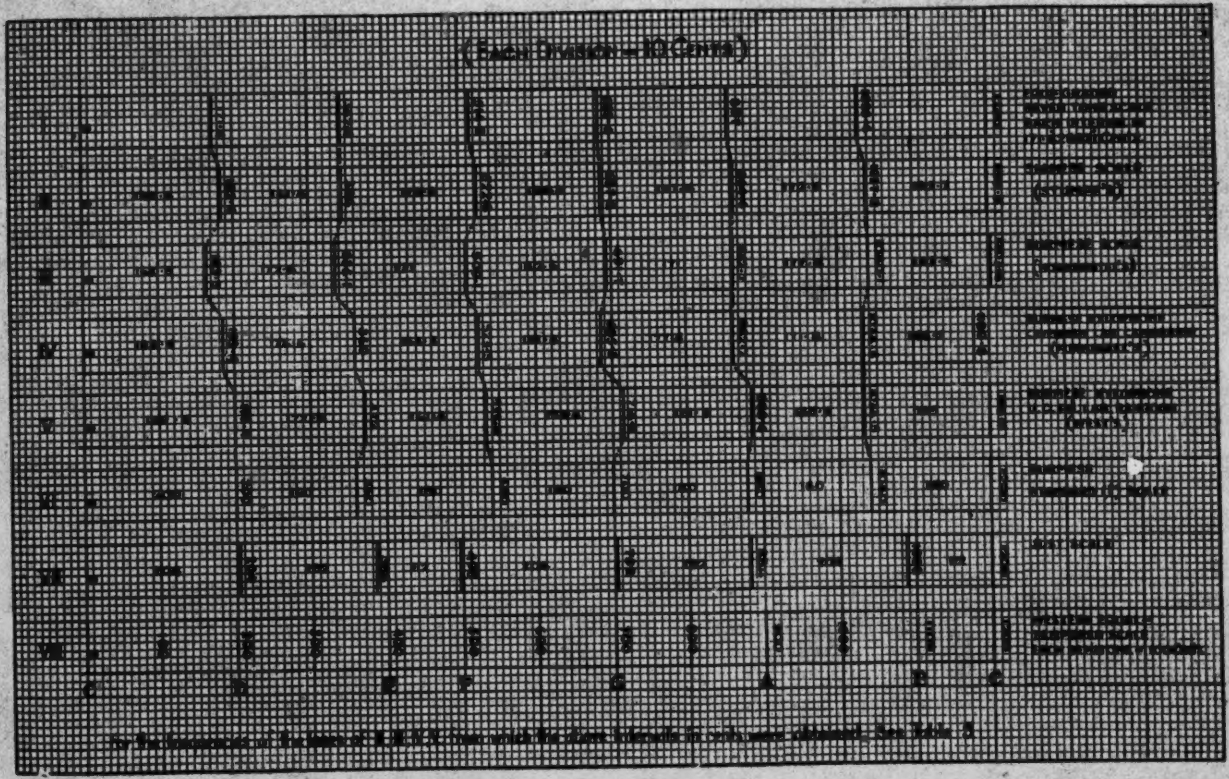
[1] *Chinese scale theories.* Appendix 6 to *The Musician's Arithmetic* by Prof. Max Meyer in the University of Missouri Studies, Vol. IV, 1929. pp. 115-6.

[2] Like the Burmese oboe နှဲ (*hnè*)

[3] *See Diagrams 2 and 3 of the Burmese oboe* နှဲ (*hnè*) *and tables* 3 and 6.

CHART SHOWING THE PROBABLE EVOLUTION OF THE BURMESE SCALE



(opposite Page 40c)

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> ....Nowadays in certain localities of China, the performance of music has come to be looked down on as a menial and unscholarly vocation.... although this aversion is not universal in China, music has been intellectually neglected for a long time. As a result music has become unmusical in China. And this in turn has increased the contempt in which it is held by the educated classes. It is a vicious circle.".......... 533 171 175

I would not have allowed myself to be thus catapulted into the problem of the Burmese scale were it not so necessary to emphasise the very sharp line of demarcation between classical evidence and musical evidence. Too long have we taken shelter behind the façade of ancient Indian culture. [114]

With regard to the most important real evidence of the written records, what have we to rely on ? Only one MS in *parabeik* form—[illegible] *Naralikha*. U San Win himself pointed out that no other Burmese work on Burmese music had ever been known to exist. Until one has seen that *parabeik* one would be foolish to talk about the Burmese scale with any conviction. The best that can be done is to proceed from the known to the unknown and talk of clues rather than discoveries.

If it were possible, a scientific survey of the principal Burmese musical instruments should establish the one Burmese scale which is common to the whole country, or rather to which all the scales all over the country approximate. Everything about us is approximate. Our tunes, having no notation, are always at variance. Western people talk of our lack of method. Yet.... 533 183

> " The elements of tone and rhythm have been combined and recombined, and have left the theory a tangled mass of forgotten systems and the practice an ineradicable instinct. The veneration for the past because of its remoteness, the mental attitude which looks away from the categories of time and space and turns its attention upon the essence of the thing itself, the faith which links the present closely with the time when the gods walked the earth and still points to the visible imprints of their feet—all these have united to personify every element of their music, and piously to preserve names and attitudes which have long lost their meaning; so that much of the theory is clear only to those who can read myth. Nor on the practical side has extemporization, as it is understood, been learned in a day, nor even in the life-time of any individual......But it is age-long practice rather than memory which has placed at the command of the best singers that inexhaustible wealth of variation with which they make a melody their own, that gift of improvisation which takes on an epic quality, as all crafts do that are handed down from father to son. To walk on the Old Trunk Road is, it has been said, to step into a chapter of Genesis ; and in the same way we catch, in these immemorial cadences, the very spirit of the rhapsodists of Homer. Their music is old, but with an age like the eternal youth of Greece, not with a second childhood like the stereotyped formulae of the Troubadours."[1]

---

[1] Fox Strangways' *Introduction to Music of Hindostan.*

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BURMESE MUSIC.

PART II.

Science and the Burmese Scale.

Technique.

Speculations and Suggestions.

The following tables were made possible by Professor West and his Staff in the Physics department of University College, who measured the *pattalars*, *hnès* (oboes) and the *palwè* (bamboo pipe) in their laboratory. Having measured the frequencies of each tone on the sonometre the intervals between each tone were calculated in cents, the octave having the value of 1200 cents. 533 534

Formula : 3986.314 (log 423—log 385) *i.e.* To find the interval in cents between Frequencies 423 and 385—

$$\begin{array}{rrrl} 2.6263 & 3.6006 & & \\ 2.5855 & 2.6107 & & \\ \hline 0.0408 & 2.2113 & \text{Antilog} & 162.7 \text{ cents.} \end{array}$$

Table 5

FREQUENCY FIGURES

(from which the intervals in Cents were calculated.)

	Siamese Scale (Stumpf's).	Burmese Scale (Hornbostel's).	Burmese Xylophone (Furnivall's).	Burmese Xylophone (West's).
D^1	(846)	672	946·9	1048
T	(770)	611·6	870·2	952·6
L	697	552	787·5	875·6
S	629	500	710·9	792·9
F	572	450	647·4	713·2
M	516	408	589·1	649·8
R	470	(369·25)	532	588
D	423	(336)	478·6	524

(Figures in brackets are obtained by multiplication or division of the original figures by 2.)

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Table 2.

COMPARATIVE TABLE OF INTERVALS IN CENTS. (C = Doh)

	Frequency Ratios.	Just Intonation	Meantone		Equal Temperament		Hornbostel's *echelle birmane*		West's Measurements of Burmese *Pattalar*		
		Intervals Cents.	Intervals Cents.	Errors Cents.	Intervals Cents.	Errors Cents.	Intervals Cents.	Errors Cents.	Intervals Cents.	Errors Cents.	
C	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	C
D	9:8	204	193	11	200	4	163·5	40·5	199·4	4·6	D
E	5:4	386	386	0	400	14	336·1	49·9	372	14	E
F	4:3	498	503	5	500	2	509·1	11·1	533·4	35·4	F
G	3:2	702	697	5	700	2	691·7	10·3	716·8	14·8	G
A	5:3	884	890	6	900	16	862·7	21·3	888·6	4·6	A
B	15:8	1088	1083	5	1100	12	1040·1	47·9	1034·5	53·5	B
C	2:1	1200	1200	0	1200	0	1203·6	3·6	1199·5	·5	C

Comparative Intervals between each note		Siamese Scale
Hornbostel	West	Cents.
Cents.	Cents.	Stumpf
163·5	199·4	182·6
172·6	172·6	161·4
173	161·4	178·6
182·6	183·4	164·6
171	171·8	177·4
177·4	145·9	172·6
163·5	165	162·7

Figures in these columns are corrected figures. In *Siam* Vol. 2, p. 193, W. A. Graham says "The Siamese gamut consists of seven equal intervals each of which is exactly 1 5/7 semitones . . ." *See* folding Chart.

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Table 3.

Table of actual figures.

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Palwi
Burmese
Bamboo-pipe
(Ring-stopped).
Measurements in inches.

....

Total length ..	9¼
Mouth end to languette	2⅛
" " to tone-hole	3¼
" " to thumb-hole	5
" " to top hole (Upper F)..	4¼
Distance between each of the seven holes ..	¾
Diameter of the pipe ..	9/16
Diameter of the smallest top hole ..	3/16
from which the holes gradually increase in diameter to the largest bottom hole (Lower F) ..	5/16

Pattalar
Burmese
Xylophone
(Bamboo)

Intervals in cents	Frequency		Frequency	Intervals in cents
		c1	1195	
				165·4
		b	1086	
				183
		a	977	
				173
		g	884	
				155·9
		f	808	
				190·1
		e	724	
				147·1
		d	665	
				163·5
		c	605	
				171·4
		B	548	
				162·3
		A	499	
				175
		G	451	
				115·2
	435·7	F	422	
173·4				181·3
	393·7	E	380	
183·4				162·3
	354·2	D	346	
230·4				247·2
	310	C	300	
157·9				254·3
	283	B1	259	
142·6				96·07
	260·6	A1	245	
134				109·6
	241·2	G1	230	
192·2				198·9
	215·9	F1	205	
				131·5
		E1	190	
				162·7
		D1	173	
				281·9
		C1	147	

(C=Doh)

533
534 How all the notes of the Burmese gamut behave will be seen from a glance at the table of actual figures. Table 3.

Originally, Table 2 was constructed from figures obtained by measuring the bamboo *pattalar*, whose actual figures are given in Table 3. Later, after measuring the brass *pattalar* the more correct figures were substituted in the columns of Table 2.

[For the time being I must let the figures speak for themselves making only one comment, that F[1] is indubitably sharper than F-natural, B flatter than B-natural, and G most nearly correct. It should be remembered that my *pattalar* may be anything but a perfect specimen.]

Long after the foregoing paragraph was written, at the instance of Mr. Furnivall, who pointed out the deficiencies of the bamboo *pattalar*, and who supplied the frequencies of the notes of his own *pattalar*, further efforts were made to obtain the measurements of the modern Burmese scale both on a *pattalar* and on the most characteristic Burmese wind-instrument, the *hnè*, *i. e.* an oboe. The *pattalar* (of brass) was carefully tuned by a professional Burmese musician and then measured together with the *hnès* in Dr. West's laboratory in the University of Rangoon. Mr. Furnivall's *pattalar* was measured in the Cavendish Laboratory, Cambridge. This is an older instrument than the brass *pattalar*, on which the scale is the scale of the present day. The Burmese scale of Hornbostel is still older, the source from which its measurement was obtained being "Zeitschrift für Ethnologie" jaarg. 1911, blz. 601 vv. The oldest of all available measurements is the Siamese scale of Stumpf from "Beitrage zur Akustik und Musikwissenschaft" Bd. III, 1901.

533 Thus, calculating from the given frequencies, the intervals in cents of all the scales have been plotted on graph-paper putting them in chronological order with the hypothetical equi-distant seven tone scale on top, and the just scale and the western tempered scale at the bottom for comparison. The result is a chart showing the probable evolution of the Burmese scale after its advance from the pentatonic basis. *See* folding chart.

Whereas the present western scale moved away from the Just Intonation *via* Mean Tone to its final drastic Equal Temperament into twelve semi-tones, the Burmese scale seems to have moved away from equi-graded seven tones to its present almost diatonic appearance. Being unchromatic it has to make one fixed scale perform the function of at least three so that modulation may be possible to some extent. Table 7 shows to what extent that is possible.

---

[1] Here and elsewhere, except where otherwise indicated by the context, the names of notes merely indicate the relative position in the scale and have no reference to absolute pitch. Thus F here is Fah.

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533[illegible]

Table 7

Showing the size of the intervals of the Standard (?) Burmese Scale with the tonic, dominant, subdominant and leading note as Doh.

D 200 R 160 M 180 F 160 S 180 L 160 T 160 D.

Just Scale.		Tonic.	Dominant.	Subdominant.	Leading Note.
1200	D¹	1200	1200	1200	1200
1088	T	1040	1040	1020	1040
884	L	880	860	860	860
702	S	700	700	660	700
498	F	540	500	500	520
386	M	360	340	340	360
204	R	200	180	160	160
0	D	0	0	0	0

There are errors of as much as 40 cents *i.e.* nearly a quarter tone. But then, Science has never come to the help of Burmese music. Writing has never helped to put Burmese music on printed record. An exact Burmese scale has never existed. Ear alone, and memory are its guardians. And the present enquiry will have come just in time if the standard (?) scale plotted on the chart with the hope of putting the Burmese scale on an exact scientific basis is found to be of any use.

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Table 6.

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The scale of the Burmese oboes *hnè-gyi* and *hnè-galé* compared to the standard (?) Burmese scale.

Hnè-gyi			*Hnè-galé*			Standard (?)	
Frequency.		Intervals.	Frequency.		Intervals.	Intervals.	
			F^1 889·2				
				185·8			
			M^1 798·7				
				190·5			
			R^1 715·5				
				161·4			
D^1 572·8		1200	D^1 651·8		1200	D^1 1200	
	179·7			161·8			160
T 516·7		1020·3	T 593·6		1038·2	T 1040	
	159·1			186·2			160
L 471		861·2	L 533·1		852	L 880	
	179·8			179·8			180
S 424·5		681·4	S 480·6		672·2	S 700	
	140·3			134·4			160
F 391·5		541·1	F 444·6		537·8	F 540	
	178·2			186·2			180
M 353·2		362·9	(399·3)		351·6	M 360	
	199·4			189·8			160
R 314·8		163·5	(357·8)		161·8	R 200	
	163·5			161·8			200
D 286·4		0	(325·9)		0	D 0	

(Figures in brackets are obtained by multiplication or division of the original figures by 2).

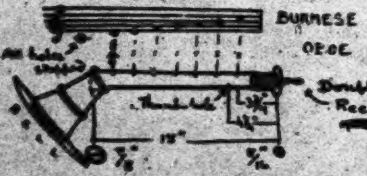
The above table shows how the scale of Burmese wind-instruments disagrees with that of the *pattalars*. The finger-holes on Burmese oboes (*hnè*) have that "uniformity and symmetry in their appearance" which K. C. Hsiao deprecates. (*See* diagrams 2 and 3). He says that in China the resultant impersonal scale was applied to the playing of stringed instruments *to be in tune with wind-instruments*. Happily for the Burmese scale the measurements of the *hnès* and the *pattalars* do NOT agree—yet.

That is a hopeful sign that the impersonal scale, which is no more than the result of a lazy way of boring finger-holes on wind-instruments, has not yet usurped the true Burmese scale. This is the time to instruct the makers of Burmese wind-instruments to bore their finger-holes more faithfully to the Burmese scale and with less *uniformity and symmetry in appearance.* Either that, or adopt the diatonic scale entirely with all its advantages. 534 171

Actually it has been the Burmese oboists who have been keeping in tune with the other Burmese instruments by means of their wonderful expertness in lipping and blowing their inadequately bored instruments. To them a precision instrument like a modern European oboe with its mechanical keys is merely an impediment. The reed on their own instruments is everything, the system of holes a mere convenience. It is amazing how their *hnès* speak not from the bell but from the staple, and how they speak! My *saya* can obtain all the notes of the chromatic scale on his *hnè* following my western oboe note by note. 533 ● 534

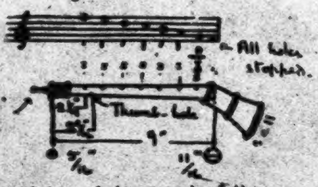
Diagrams 2 and 3 will show the different arrangements of the scale on *hnè-gyi* (big oboe) and *hnè-galé* (little oboe), the former beginning and ending with the tonic and the latter with the subdominant. That does not mean that we have tenor oboes, alto oboes, transposing oboes and so on. The arrangement is purely for convenience. The middle one of the finger-holes being the most convenient place for the most frequently fingered predominating note, on the *hnè-gyi*, which plays those tunes with the subdominant predominating, that note is placed in the middle. On the *hnè-galé*, which plays those tunes with the tonic predominating, the tonic is placed in the middle. The theory of the "predominating note" will be developed in the course of this article.

Diagram 2
(Hnè-gyi)



Distance between each of the seven holes - 1¼"

Diagram 3 (Hnè-galé)



Distance between each of the seven holes - ¾"

The bell of this brass is hung loosely by means of cords. It is of no acoustic value and is often dispensed with. : Hnè-gyi is used for grand style songs in the subdominant mode; and : Hnè-galé for songs in the ordinary key of the approximate diatonic major scale. All the holes in both instruments are of the same size.

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[114]

Now comes the time to discuss the technical remarks of Mr. Paul Edmonds and Mr. P. A. Mariano mentioned at the beginning of this article. In Chap. VII of his *Peacocks and Pagodas* (Routledge, 1924) Paul Edmonds says:

> Hla Tin having fixed up his mandolin proceeded to play me a tune. The tune, he said, was the introduction to the "baw lè," and the "baw lè" is the tune to which all songs of a sad and plaintive character are commonly sung—though there is nothing about the tune that sounds sad to the western ears[1]. The short introduction was in two parts, the lower being a kind of rough counterpoint[2]. It is played at the beginning, between every verse, and at the end. I wrote it down on paper in western notation after several repetitions, (*See* Example 4), and upon examining the upper part, or tune, was interested to find that it was apparently in the pentatonic scale. I then successfully transcribed the "baw lè" tune proper, (*See* Example 6), but this was, I found, approximately in our ordinary major scale, and it was difficult to say for certain whether or not the tune had originally been pentatonic[3].

Paul Edmonds also examined the xylophone (*pattalar*), the drum-circle (*saingwaing*), and the gong-circle (*kyi-waing*) and said:

> The pattala, which seemed to be in the key of C, had an eight-note scale; but at first I was puzzled to classify it, since in the upper octave the note B was nearer to B-flat than to B-natural, whereas in the lower octave it was the other way about. How to account for an approximate B-flat in one octave and an approximate B-natural in the octave in the same instrument was a problem[4]. The note F in both octaves was indeterminate. It seemed to be about midway between F and F-sharp[5].
>
> This first suggested to me what I now believe to be the true explanation, which is that the pentatonic scale is the foundation and that notes have been roughly inserted in the two gaps between E and G and between A and C in order to make the scale approximate to the Western major scale. I was not sure of this at that time, but subsequent investigations confirmed it.

I wish Paul Edmonds had left a full account of his investigations. It would be a real service not only to future research but also to Burmese music. While heartily agreeing with him that the pentatonic scale was the foundation of the Burmese scale, I hesitate

---

[1] No wonder. Hla Tin has spoilt the plaintive part of the tune with a variation: (*See* Example 7) the last beat of the third bar leading down to the tonic in the beginning of the bar following. These five notes are characteristic of the *baw-lè* cadence, and of the original Burmese tonality. Harmonically, they form the arpeggio of the tonic major chord with added sixth like the arpeggio ending to Grieg's *To the Spring* in F-sharp major.

[2] P.E. apparently here refers to Hla Tin's thumb work. When playing the mandolin a Burman does not use the plectrum. Forefinger and thumb are employed, the latter to strike an occasional lower octave or the Fourth or the Fifth, or to help the forefinger along with the melody. The result perhaps often sounds like rough counterpoint. But the tune was certainly not in two parts. The division is of labour, not thematic.

[113]
[175]

[3] It could not be. *Bawlè* is a very much later invention attributed to Hlaing-Hteik-Khaung-Tin (1833-1875 A.D.) an excellent summary of whose life translated by Nyi Nyi from the excellent series of short biographies of famous Burmese authoresses by Ma Ma Gyi, appeared in the *World of Books* Nos. 136-137. U Thein Han (Zaw Gyi) points out the germ of the *baw-lè* tune in the concluding part of a *patpyo* "ya-gon-myaing-gyar" attributed by some to Myawadiwungyi and by others to Hlaing-Hteik-Khaung-Tin's own mother Ma Mya Gale.

[4] I would blame its maker. My *pattalar* reveals just the opposite.

[5] It is still there.

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to believe that the two notes he mentioned had been inserted in the way he mentioned. Hornbostel's *echelle birmane* stands in the way. Much more seems to have happened to the Burmese scale than the insertion mentioned by Paul Edmonds. To continue : 533 ●

> The tuning of the gongs, as I rather anticipated, was similar to the tuning of the pattala... ..The drum-circle, however, was tuned, I was excited to find, in the pentatonic scale; there was no F and no B, with the exception of an F in the top octave of all. (*See* Examples 1, 2, 3). My discovery of the pentatonic tuning of the drum-circle fairly convinced me that the pentatonic scale is, as I had already begun to suspect, the foundation of Burmese music. And when I came to re-examine the two tunes which I had thought showed no signs of pentatonic origin, I found one significant point which I had previously overlooked— all the cadences were pentatonic, and there was no cadence in which the leading-note B appeared as the penultimate note.

Examples 1, 2, and 3 will show that Paul Edmonds' tuning of the drum-circle does not agree with U San Win's. But that will be because the modern drum-circle has had added to it three more drums. And perhaps it has also become sophisticated, as oriental ears have unconsciously become with the western diatonic major scale. In the beginning the drum-circle was not even a circle. It was a semi-circle, called လခြမ်းဆိုင်း (*la-chan-saing*) half-moon-band, the tuning of which could not be but pentatonic, to supply the ground notes of the tunes. The most characteristic (*the first violin*), among Burmese musical instruments is the နှဲ *hnè*, Burmese oboe, whose limitless flexibility of tone has now been overwhelmed by the blustering gusto of the completed drum-circle. (*See* Diagrams 2 and 3). Although only one octave is shown in the diagrams, notes of the octave above are easily obtained by lipping and overblowing. Actual blowing of the *hnè* in diagram 3 side by side with the modern oboe (new philharmonic pitch) shows that the lowest note of the *hnè* corresponds to the lowest A of the oboe, and the *hnè*'s highest practicable note corresponds to the oboe's highest E, *i.e.* third line above the treble stave. The natural scale of the *hnè* is D pitched one octave higher. 533 177

The *bawlè* Paul Edmonds heard might not have had any cadence which was not pentatonic. Nowadays it has too many things. Worse offenders than Hla Tin have with their variations, *fioritura* and *bravura* twisted its characteristic cadence out of all recognition. But there certainly are any amount of pentatonic cadences in Burmese music. In fact, an improvization strictly on the black keys of the piano sounds more Burmese than many a modern Burmese song.

His statement that the Burmese band, owing to the fixed scale of the gong-circle, always played in one key, C major—approximately, is very significant, though the reason, as will be seen later, 533

● 533 may be other than "the fixed scale of the gong-circle." The absence of semitones or accidentals convinced him that modulation into other keys was impossible. On the other hand Mariano decided that there *was* modulation into other keys. If the original scale was not an approximate affair, and the keys into which modulation occurred were also not approximate, then of course no modulation would be possible without semitones or accidentals or equi-distant intervals. It is now Mr. Mariano's turn. I draw attention at this point to the classical diagram of modulation, or rather, the rotation of the position of *amça*[1] and to the examples of the tuning of some Burmese musical instruments, with acknowledgments both to U Ba Choe and U San Win. [*See* diagrams 1, 2, 3, 4].

Diagram 4.

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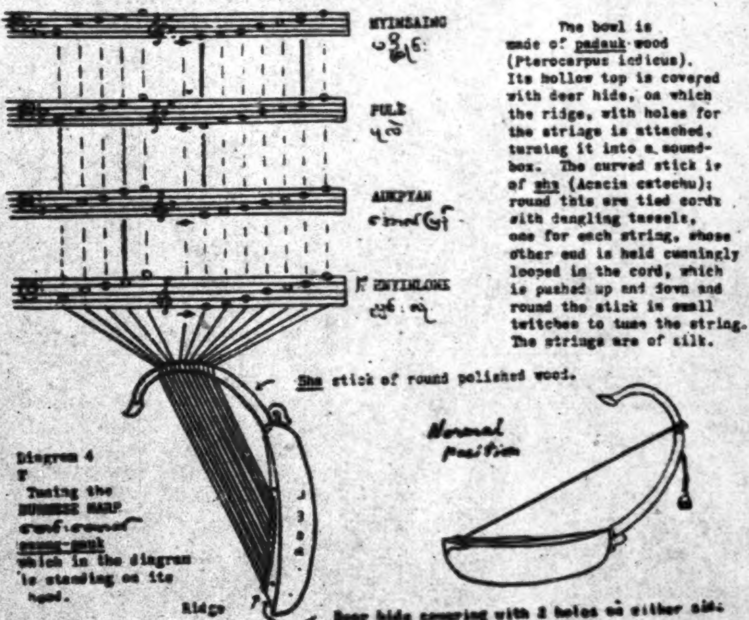
534

Notes atop these thick lines are raised one degree

Notes atop these wavy lines are lowered one degree.

The key-signatures in the DIAGRAM OF TUNING THE BURMESE HARP shown below must not be taken too seriously. They only denote change of mode.


MYINSAING
PULE
AUNGPYAN
ENYIMLONE
Sha stick of round polished wood.
Ridge
Normal position
Deer hide covering with 2 holes on either side of the ridge.

The bowl is made of padauk wood (Pterocarpus indicus). Its hollow top is covered with deer hide, on which the ridge, with holes for the strings is attached, turning it into a sound-box. The curved stick is of sha (Acacia catechu); round this are tied cords with dangling tassels, one for each string, whose other end is held cunningly looped in the cord, which is pushed up and down and round the stick in small twitches to tune the string. The strings are of silk.

Diagram 4
F
Tuning the
BURMESE HARP
saung-gauk
which in the diagram
is standing on its
head.

---

[1] This word *amça* will be explained in the later pages.

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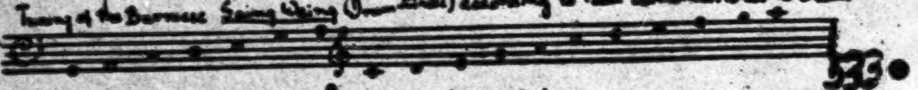
(412 2)

PLATE 1

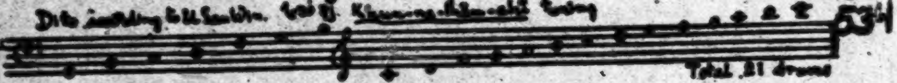
Tuning of the Burmese Saing Waing (Drum-circle) according to Paul Edmonds. Total 18 drums.

Ex. 1



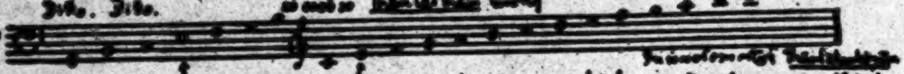
Ditto according to U Sein Win. [illegible] Kyauk-[illegible] tuning

Ex. 2



Ditto. Ditto. [illegible] Thein [illegible] tuning

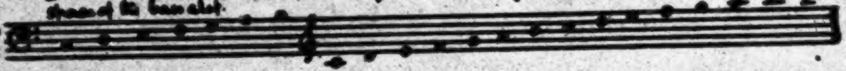
Ex. 3



Fourth and ninth drums are tuned 1 degree higher. / The sixth drum also 1/2 higher.

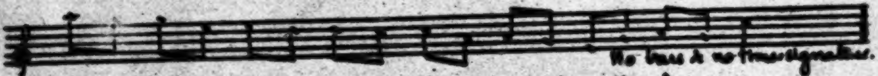
Pattala [illegible] (Bamboo Xylophone) and Kyi-waing [illegible] (Brass gong-circle) are tuned [illegible], the former starting approximately at the second and the latter at the fourth space of the bass clef.

Ex. 3a



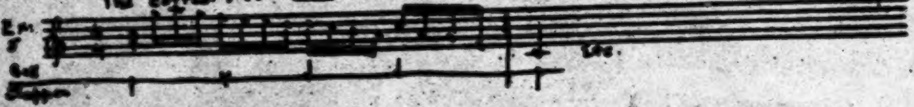
Edmond's notation of Introduction (? i.e. Interlude or own Atwe) to [illegible].

Ex. 4



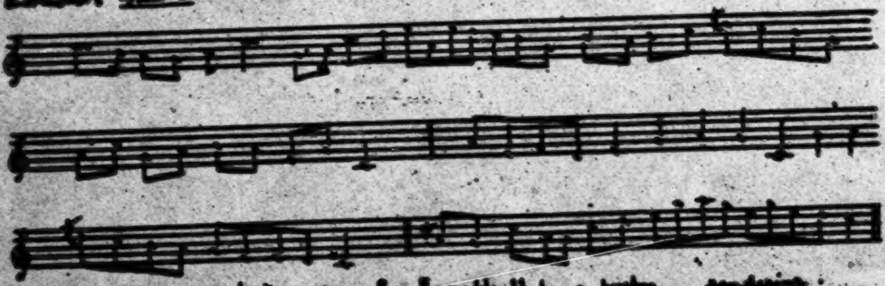
The correct [illegible] Atwe (Interlude. [illegible] calls it symphony)

Ex. 5



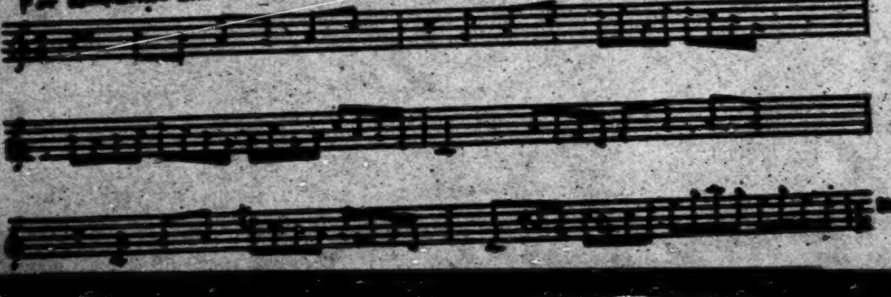
Edmond's [illegible] tune, unbarred and without time-signatures.

Ex. 6



For comparison with the tune above: See Ensemble 11 for a proper rendering.

Ex. 7



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(412 b)

PLATE II

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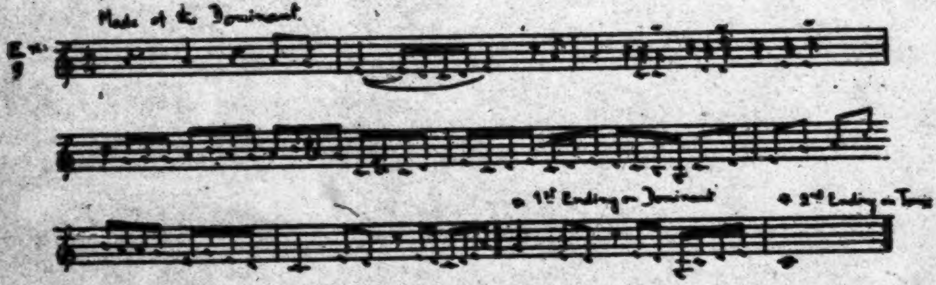
Mode of the Dominant.
Ex. 9
* 1st Ending on Dominant
* 2nd Ending on Tonic

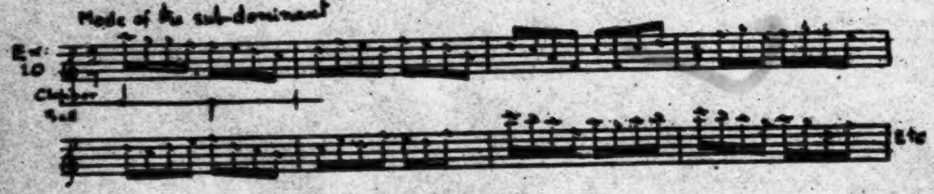
Mode of the sub-dominant
Ex. 10
Clapper
Bell
Etc

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PLATE III

Baw-li

Example 11.

Song, with instrumental accompaniment.

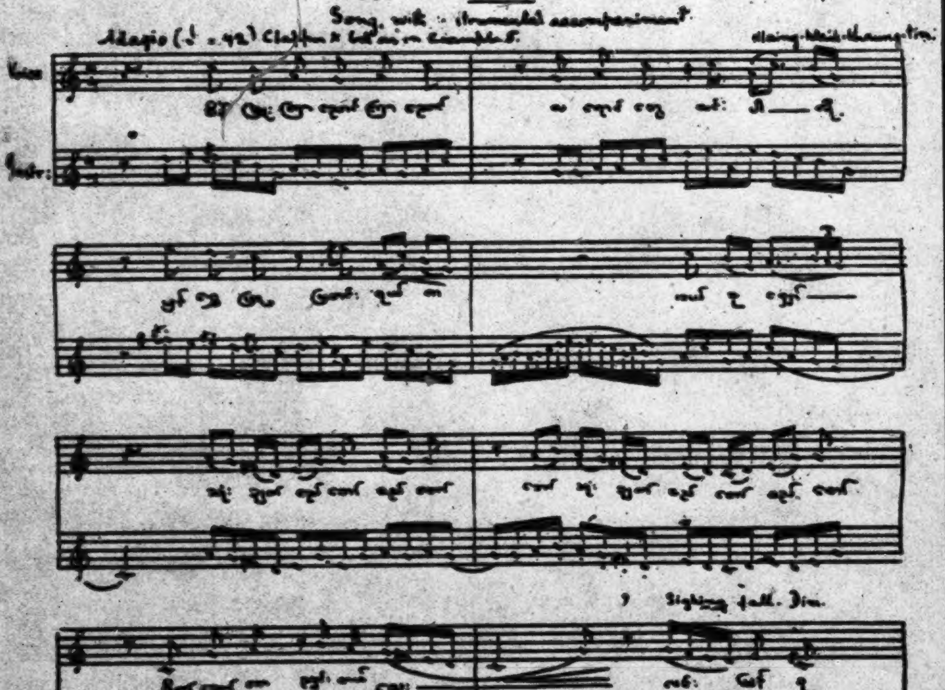
Adagio (♩ = 42) Clapper & bell as in Example 5.
Voice
Instr.
Sighing fall. Dim.
Etc. See complete score of song for sitting dance

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PLATE IV

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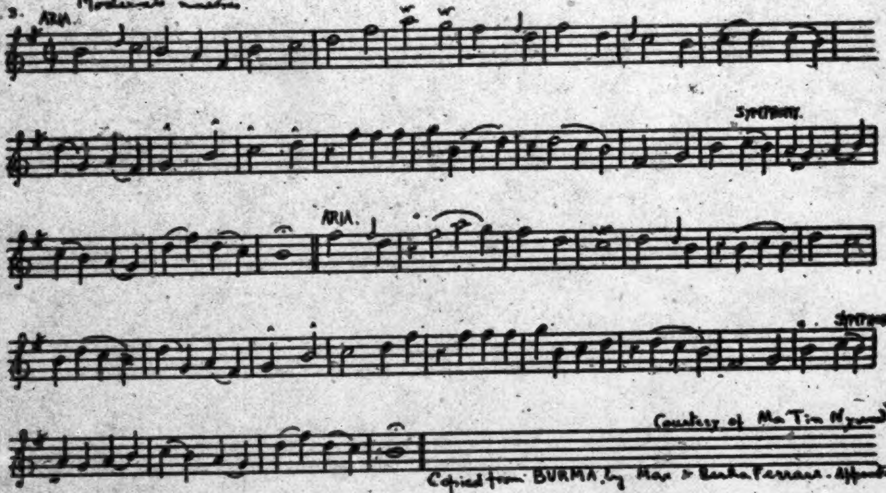
Mariano's notation of Nanthain-Yodaya. Example 11a

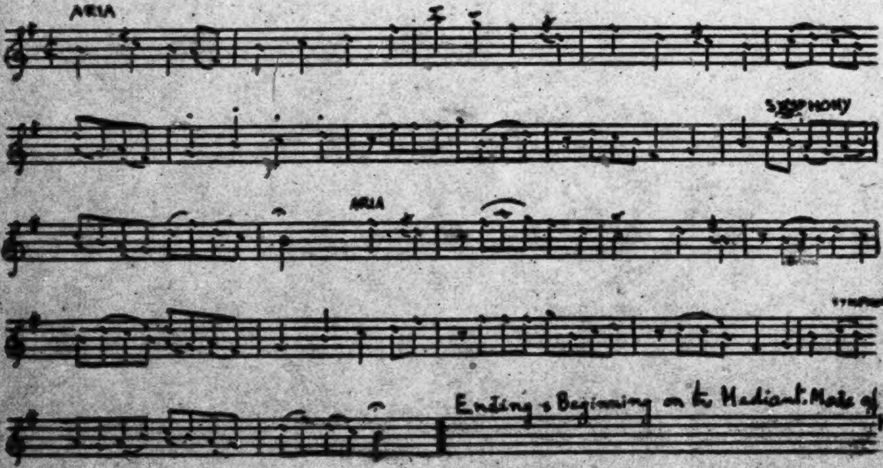
No. 3. Moderato maestoso


ARIA.
SYMPHONY.
ARIA.
SYMPHONY.

Courtesy of Ma Tin Nyunt.

Copied from BURMA, by Max & Bertha Ferrars. Appendix.

Ditto. Different barring


ARIA
SYMPHONY
ARIA
SYMPHONY

Ending & Beginning on the Mediant. Mode of the Mediant?

BURMESE MUSIC.

●533 [114] In appendix C to *Burma* by Max and Bertha Ferrars (Low, Marston, 1900) Mr. Mariano says:

> The fundamental pitch-note of Burmese music corresponds to our A-natural. Three kinds of scales are used. The first is the Doric scale consisting of the first, second, fifth, sixth and eighth intervals of the diatonic scale...

In example 7, I have drawn attention to the last beat of the third bar, which, with the first note in the bar following formed the C - E - G - A - C cadence so familiar to our ears. Unless Mr. Mariano meant the third instead of the second interval mentioned above, I am ignorant of the Doric scale he spoke of. In fact I have floundered among the Greek scales and the ecclesiastical modes of Europe in the hope of finding a short-cut to an explanation of the unchromatic Burmese scale. I fight shy of comparing the Burmese scale with the old modes of the West.

Mariano:

> The second is the Burmese diatonic scale, in which however, the Seventh is tuned flat by about a quarter tone. There are no flats or sharps in the Burmese gamut. Nevertheless changes of keys are not infrequent in their melodies. These invariably proceed from the tonic to the sub-dominant but without the introduction of the seventh flat, as there is no regular system of counterpoint. Here the advantage of tuning the Seventh somewhat flat is apparent, for it does duty as the Fourth interval of the new key. A change from the tonic to the dominant also sometimes takes place.

Mr. Mariano does not mention if it does so without the fourth sharp. Yet so it does by the help of the half-sharp Fourth which does duty as the Seventh of the new key. Mariano:

> The third scale is a kind of minor; it consists of the same notes as the major diatonic scale but it begins and ends with the third interval..

533 536 This scale is strictly speaking only a mode, the modes of the mediant (*see* Example 11*a*). There seems to be also the modes of the dominant and the sub-dominant (*See* Examples 9 and 10). Oddly enough the E-mode, which Mr. Mariano describes as a kind of minor[1], is commonly used in the happy lovemaking scenes နှစ်ပါးသွား *hnitpathwa* in *pwès* where the Prince and the Princess dance and sing in this E-mode till, after about two hours, troth has been plighted and, in the final bar of the last song, the voice without stopping at the temporary keynote E holds it for a moment and then slides *via* D down to the real old tonic C; this descent being the signal that the scene has ended. Mr. Stewart describes the scene better:

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[1] "The Greek mode beginning with E was supposed to have manly and vigorous qualities."—R. T. White in *Music and its Story*.

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● 533 536 The real hero and heroine—again a Prince and Princess—then come on, and with the aids of clowns in attendance on them, go through a stock scene which is known as "the plighting of the troth." In this a few words may be said about the plot, but it is soon forgotten and the scene consists of alternate or simultaneous singing or dancing, the Prince ardent, the Princess coy or perhaps provoking a pretty quarrel, with frequent interjections by the clowns designed to vary the entertainment and to give the Prince and Princess time to recover their wind. During this scene all the performers have been addressing each other by their real names, stimulating the orchestra to greater efforts, and occasionally making speeches to the audience. About two o'clock, after two hours of really hard work, somebody remembers that they had started with the intention of acting a play, and, with a few words as to the plot, the scene closes.[1]

533 I doubt if discussion on Burmese changes of key, and modulation can ever be closed. My notes on the quotations from Mr. Mariano leave only one *bona-fide* key, the peculiar diatonic major key with indeterminate Fourth and Seventh both of which made it possible to change into approximate key of F and an approximate key of G. In the classical diagram of the circle of keys is set the prescribed circular succession of keys in under-fifths which (on the diagram) are identified with C F B E A D G C, but which, according to western musical theory, can only be C F B-flat E-flat A-flat D-flat G-flat C-flat, which is not by any means a circle.

Moreover, both U San Win and U Ba Choe state that nowadays only four keys are in use:—

C—ညှင်းလုံး *Hnyinlone* for the oldest and grandest class of songs. ကြိုး ဘွဲ့ သီချင်းခန်

F*—အောက်ပြန် *Aukpyan* for songs not so old and grand, and ritual songs ပတ်ပျိုး လောကနတ်သံ လေးချိုးကြီး etc.

B*—ပုလဲ *Pulè* for Siamese, Talaing, *Bawlè* and new songs. ယိုးဒယား တလိုင်း ဘောလယ် ရွှေသံခန်များ

E*—မြင်စိုင်း *Myinsaing* for *Taydat* (sonnet-like songs) and *Dainthan* တေးထပ် ရှစ်ဆယ်ပေါ် ဒိန်းသံ

*Presumably

It is hard indeed to settle out of hand such questions of fundamental importance as keys and modes and modulation, especially when a western language and terminology have been found to be inadequate to represent the musical phenomena of the East. (*See* Fox Strangways on the translation of RĀGA on page 4 of this article.) One does not make pronouncements on one's own responsibility knowing very well that the proper thing to

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[1] *The Burmese Stage*, in the Journal of the Royal Society of Arts. Vol. LXXXVII No. 4516.

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be done is a thorough examination of the whole question by a conclave of experts who combine a knowledge of Burmese music with a knowledge of western musical theory. The matter is now extremely urgent. Burmese music seems to be dying out. Perhaps I may be permitted to leave about some threads which will lead future more competent research to their final unravelling. I only hope that the urgency will be recognised and early efforts made to begin a proper study of the music of the country. 533●

I have reduced Mr. Mariano's three kinds of scales into one *bona-fide* key—the peculiar major diatonic scale with indeterminate Fourth and Seventh within which there are changes—of key? of mode? I shall not say at present.

With the classical circle of keys I shall deal later.

The four keys still extant, as set out by U Ba Choe and U San Win are presumably the keys of C, F, B, E, in which different prescribed classes of Burmese songs must be played or sung, and in the prescribed order. It would not do to play a *yodaya* ယိုးဒယား or a *bawlè* ဘောလယ် in immediate succession to a *kyoh* ကြိုး A song from the *patpyo* ပတ်ပျိုး class must be the next to follow. Otherwise the new song will jar on the ear. All this is perfectly true. The puzzle is this: **When discussing the laws of Burmese music does the word 'key' in its strictly technical sense apply?** I have met with many difficulties because I have so far been using this word with its strict musical denotations to represent a musical phenomenon which may be, so far as I know, represented by either one or all of the following three:— 533 [101]

1. Actual change of key.
2. Change of mode.
3. Change of 'tessitura'.

Again 'tessitura' is not quite right for the Sanskrit word *aṃça* Hearken to Fox Strangways, "What gives its peculiar flavour to a melody . . is the position of *aṃça*. Round it, and round its consonant or correlative (*samwadi*)—a note at the distance of a Fourth or a Fifth from it[1]—are grouped the phrases of the song. They derive their meaning, their point, from their relation to it. It is easy to see that the character of a phrase would completely alter according as the *aṃça*, the salient note of the scale, were made the salient note of the phrase, or not. The *aṃça* may be any place in the scale not excluding the keynote or drone-note. The first section of the

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[1] In Burmese music, more often a Fourth than a Fifth.

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tune usually circles round the *amça* and the second round its consonant. Aesthetic effect of a high or low *amça* is quite different, and in this respect the *amça* and all that it implies may be compared with what we know as *tessitura*, though that is rather a 'range of notes,' whereas the *amça* is a single note. Over against *amça* stands the drone-note, or keynote. **These two notes divide between them the function of our tonic.**"[1]

I shall leave it at that. The last sentence is significant not only because it may lead to a solution of our whole problem, but because it reminds me repeatedly of what my Burmese *saya* said to me once about the playing of the *patpyo* ပတ်ပျိုး In these songs the tune seems to circle continually round the dominant and almost end with the dominant but that the main song *must* be followed by a postlude သံဖြန် (*thaphyan*)[2] in free time which is the means of effecting a return to the tonic. I asked him if the *patpyo* ပတ်ပျိုး was not in the key of G, and why was I not using F-sharp instead of F-natural ? He said that it was not in the key of G ; the tune only kept hovering round G ; and it had to come back to the keynote C. "သံပုန်နှံ့ ပြန်ပေါင်း ရတယ်၊ ပေါင်းသွင်းမှ ဆင်းပုန်တယ်" That was why a *thaphyan* post-lude must invariably follow a *patpyo* ပတ်ပျိုး That was also why the Prince, at the end of the plighting of the troth scene, did not end the last song with the mediant but held it for a moment in order to return to the old tonic C. Now, were the dominant and tonic of the *patpyo*, and the mediant and tonic of the troth-plighting songs "dividing between themselves the function of the tonic ?" Was a similar thing happening when the *Hnyinlone* ညှင်းလုံး class of songs were being played ? The key was C-c, but the sub-dominant F often seemed to be the tonic. Were C and F also dividing between themselves the function of the tonic ? Can it be that in reality the key is only one in every case, an approximate diatonic major ; only the position of the *amça* is changed; and the terms *Hnyinlone* ညှင်းလုံး, *Aukpyan* အောက်ပြန်, *Pulè* ပုလဲ, *Myinsaing* မြင်စိုင်း apply not to four different keys but to the four different methods of tuning the Burmese harp for the sake of convenience in playing the four different classes of songs; and therefore are not to be identified with the keys of C, F, B, E, but rather with the four different positions of the *amça* in the four classes, *viz.*, *kyoh*, *patpyo*, *yodaya*, *tédat*, ကြိုး ပတ်ပျိုး ယိုးဒယား တေးထပ် ?[3]

I will leave these questions to be answered more authoritatively. I did carry out one experiment.

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[1] *Music of Hindustan* Chap. XII.

[2] သံဖြန် is a corruption of သံ *than* (sound, or note) and ဖြန် *phyan* (unravel) *i.e.* restore the function of the tonic to the tonic proper.

[3] *Amça* can then be translated as "the predominating *Degree* of the scale."

Burmese pianists, who do not want to be bothered with the black keys of the piano have their piano tuned, as they say, 'in the Burmese way' *i.e.* with B flattened and F sharpened by about a quarter tone, and E very slightly flattened.

Then, they play all their songs with C as the keynote, but always in obedience to the prescribed order of the classes of songs. I used to think that it was because that method of tuning enabled them to modulate from C to G or F and back again without using F-sharp or B-flat. That was only partly true. They tuned their pianos in their own way not only for the sake of modulation but to make their own songs still sound Burmese in their ears. Everybody, including Fox Strangways, realises that western keyed instruments spell disaster to oriental music. The tuning of the piano in 'the Burmese way.' seems to be a desperate effort on the part of Burmese pianists to preserve the tonality peculiar to their songs.

The experiment was to watch a Burmese pianist playing on my piano (which is not tuned in the Burmese way) a representative song from each class of songs in the prescribed order of succession, to see whether she did or did not play all the four songs in one and the same key *i.e.* of the approximate C major. She did. I asked her if she always played all Burmese songs with C as the tonic on other pianos? Yes, except on pianos tuned in the Burmese way with D as the tonic[1] In table 4 are tentative identifications of the keys used.

There is no doubt whatever that something like modulation occurs frequently not only in changing from one class of songs to another but in one and the same song also. The question is: *is* it change of key? The peculiar nature of our scale, the fact that it is no longer equal-tempered, and our lack of a chromatic scale, forbids us the use of that word in its strictly technical sense. Then, shall we call it change of *aṃça*? That is a Sanskrit word. Perhaps there is a Burmese word for it in the နရလေခါ *Naralékha*. Where is the *Naralékha*?

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[1] That is in order to raise the pitch. And also perhaps because the Burmese players of string instruments have the tonic on the open third or D-string. Most Burmese violinists and mandolinists tune the four strings A-D-A-D instead of G-D-A-E. The latter even remove from their instruments the *frets* for what are known as the 'black' notes of the chromatic scale; to them they are unnecessary. In the tuning of the drum-circle (*Saingwaing*) and the harp (*Saunggauk*) it will be noticed that there does not seem to be any change of key, the changes being only of the degrees of the scale. *See* Examples 2 and 3, and Diagram 4.

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Tentative identification of Burmese keys.

Table 4.

Key.	Amça.	Class of songs.	Harp Terms.
C	F.	ကြိုး။ ဘွဲ့။ သီချင်းခံ။ *Kyoh, Bwè, Thachingan*	*Hnyin lone.* ညှင်းလုံး။
	G	ပတ်ပျိုး။ လောကနတ်သံ။ လေးထွေသံကစ်။ *Patpyo etc.*	*Aukpyan.* အောက်ပြန်
	E	သစ္စာထားကမန်းညြည်သံနန်းသီချင်း။ *Troth plighting, etc.*	
	?	တလိုင်းသံ။ ယိုးဒယား။ ငွေ့သံဆန်။ *Yodayah, etc.*	ပုလဲ။ *Pulè*
with	F sharp	ဘောလယ်။ သဖြန့်ဘောလယ်။ *baw-lè*	
F	with B flat	တေးထပ်။ ရှစ်ဆယ်ပေါ်။ *Tedat, etc.*	မြင့်စိုင်း။ *Myint Saing*
	B natural	ဆယ်ဆယ်ရောင်ခြွဒိန်းသံ။ also ဘောလယ်။ *Lainthan*, also *Baw-lè*	

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BURMESE MUSIC.

As for the classical cycle of keys, diagrams of which appeared both in ~~U~~ Ba Choe's article and U San Win's book 2, both U Ba Choe and U San Win quote authoritative verses from classical literature (*Nātakaratanakosa* နာဋကရတနကောသကျမ်း) but regret that not all the keys mentioned are in use in this decadent age. With due reverence for the classics I shall assign these verses like Ruskin's works on art and Pater's, to literature. It is becoming increasingly difficult to fit ~~classical~~ theory with the actual music. Whereas our classical literature came *en masse* from ancient India along with Buddhism many hundred years ago our music seems to have come from the east. Indeed one class of songs *yodaya* ယိုးဒယား came *en masse* from Siam less than two centuries ago. Music is the last thing that could have come with Buddhism. It seems to have developed quite independently of classical literature. In fact Burmese poetry *linga* လင်္ကာ *alaṅkāra*) is quite distinct from Burmese song (*thachin* သီချင်း) and from both stands massive and remote the Buddhist literature of the *tripitaka* in the Pali language. 533 178 101 [779] [538]

What seems to have happened is that while the elegant royalty and courtesans in the palace were delighting in the intricacies of Burmese versification with liberal infusion of both the Pali language and the Buddhist philosophy, music in its robust form was having its origins in animistic ritual (နတ်ပွဲ), in the village when somebody was giving alms and in the paddy-fields when the transplanting of the seedlings were in progress. For the former we have *Byaw*[1] (ဗျော) stick-struck drum songs, and for the latter we have *Bonshay* (ဗုံရှည်) long-drum or *kauksaik* (ကောက်စိုက်) transplanting songs. *Kyoh* (ကြိုး) that most ancient class of Burmese songs also must have been in the beginning a labour chant for concerted action that germinated in ancient row boats, grew into a boat-song, and then developed for royal ears into its present high order of melodic and literary grandeur (*vide* the royal barge songs : ဖောင်ဆိုက်ကြိုး when the barge makes port, ဖောင်ငင်ကြိုး when the barge is being towed out by rowers in open boats, ဖောင်လော်ကြိုး when the barge is underway [2]. The cadences of these still recall the rhythmic flash of wet oars in the sun. Thus Burmese music had as its sponsor the rustic festivals and the occupation of the hewers of wood and drawers of water, and not the Church as 533 178

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[1] [illegible] 'A dancer's life (or dancing) begins with a tray of banana offerings (or pad marked by a central fire-bowl stand of plantain trunk) in a *byaw* music party. Till 1698 A. D. when the 8th king of the Nyaungyan dynasty [illegible] *Sané Min* came to the throne there existed only intoned poems [illegible] [illegible] but no real Burmese music. [illegible] by U Nu. San Magazine, 1938.

[2] U Ba Choe told me that this was not true. This class of songs used to be played as exercises in the playing of the Burmese harp, when the pupil first learns to pluck simultaneously certain strings (ကြိုး *Kyoh*). For a full explanation of it see [illegible] by U San Win.

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●533 in Europe. Indeed the Buddhist religion so frowns upon music
178 that it was practised rather shamefacedly and its dèvotees are often
[779] called *Phet-khwet-sā* (Eaters out of leaves), *i.e.* vagabonds. Even so
recently as last year a learned old Burmese gentleman loth to depart this life without imparting all of his Burmese learning concluded a series of Burmese articles on Burmese music and dancing with an apology for having at all indulged in such frivolities.

533 Music found in the irrepressible gaiety of the Burmese people
181 a fertile soil and it let its roots deep into the soil, and soon from
178 occupational songs music developed into an art-form which finally
585 invaded the towns, the capital and the royal palace. There it
177 received fresh impetus from a system of competitive patronage in
which the king himself joined with his own band. There also, apparently it received its classical nomenclature. Names which sound imposing enough—သရ၊ မုစ္ဆနာ၊ ဂါမ၊ သုတိ၊ etc. *Svara*, *Mūrchana*, *Grāma*, *Çruti* etc.—but meant for quite different things, must have been borrowed in their entirety for the sake of their classical origin, so that the names were not in accordance with what they stood for, even as the Greek names, by which the western ecclesiastical modes were distinguished, were not in accordance with those of the ancient Greek octave system from which the names were taken. Thus it seems Burmese musical theory in the classical manner is a grafted dignity which dignifies but does not apply. Indeed it seems yet to be written.

533 However, to go on with Mariano: "Pure Burmese melodies are beautiful in themselves. But on account of the preponderance of grace-notes (mordente, acciaccatura, appoggiatura) Europeans find it difficult to catch Burmese tunes.". This is very true, but not true enough. Ornament in Burmese music does something more than preponderate. They themselves are an inherent part of the tunes. That is why when a Burmese song is taken down by a western musican and reproduced, the ornaments having been unappreciated and eschewed the 'tune' that remains no longer sounds Burmese. Fox Strangways explains succinctly:

> "We think of grace-notes as something which may but need not be added to the note, not as something actually inherent in it. If cultivated for their own sake or used at all in excess they are regarded by us as meretricious......Indian 'grace' is different in kind. There never is the least suggestion of anything having been 'added' to the note which is graced. The note with the grace makes one utterance. The object of grace is, of course, to add importance to the particular note, but there are such varying degrees in which this may be done

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> that the whole system of *ga nak*, the general term for the thing becomes an elaborate vehicle of light and shade. It brings the notes of a melody, as surely as the various light and shade of a picture brings the contours of the face, from the flat into the round; which again is precisely what harmony does for them, by assigning to the successive notes varying degrees of consonance. There is an obvious reason for grace-notes wherever there is no harmony. For a melody is a sentence with important 'words' and unimportant, and grace-notes and harmonic texture are the only two things that can always be applied to enhance this importance. For stress and quantity, which serve this purpose in verse, are not so well adapted to music. Stress, which is additional volume, is difficult to achieve with low notes; and quantity, which is additional duration, alters the melody itself, imposing ~~on it~~ from without something which should come from within." 533 ●

Although Burmese 'grace' may not be so elaborate or systematised as the Indian *gamak*, much of the above quotation equally applies to Burmese music. Much will have to be pointed out in notation when I deal with the problem of the 'writing' of Burmese music[1]. Mr. Mariano concluded: "It is a matter for great regret that the beautiful music which the Burmans unquestionably possess is being forgotten. The modern tendency is to imitate European and Indian themes, and the time is not distant when genuine Burmese music will be a thing of the past." 533 101

He wrote that 40 years ago. Nowadays, the gramophone record business has encouraged wholesale filching of jazz tunes, first divested of harmony and then re-dressed in an imitation of it, with Burmese words making ungainly efforts to step along side by side with the wholly unsuitable western tunes. Shades of Mariano! 533 178

It is a matter for rejoicing that a state school of fine-arts has come into being. How much more rejoicing there would be in the hearts of lovers of true Burmese music if the government, instead of merely opening a class for teaching how to play certain musical instruments, had seized upon the means of saving real Burmese music from oblivion. The implacability of business so far as gramophone records are concerned, the rapid deterioration of public taste pandered to by radio and gramophone, the invasion [207] [296]

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[1] A full treatment of Burmese grace with classified examples in staff-notation will require a separate chapter in the manner of the chapter on Ornamentation in Arnold Dolmetsch's *Interpretation of the music of 17th and 18th centuries*. For the present see specimens in the complete violin part of *Bon-lè*.

533 178 of western instruments and instrumentation, the ephemeral catchiness of jazz tunes—who, but the government can save Burmese music from the combined assault of these powerful forces?

533 185 True Burmese music nowadays resides only in the memory of old Burmese musicians. And they are now too old. Their music should be recorded. They should be organised into a state orchestra and paid to broadcast selections from the classics at least twice a week. Their instruments should be measured and a standard pitch and a standard scale should be fixed and one complete set of Burmese musical instruments should be maintained and kept correctly in tune for purposes of research. The notation of the authentic ground patterns of Burmese classical songs should be undertaken. As an urgent preliminary measure U San Win should be subsidised to carry out his notation of the classics in his own style so that important classical tunes may be preserved for future more scientific notation and instrumentation. Above all, organised research into the theory of Burmese music should be instituted at once with suitable equipment and aid[1].

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[1] I am glad to add that the Government has responded generously to the application of the Burma Research Society for a grant towards the recording of a representative selection of Burmese classical songs, verse-forms, and drum music, for the gramophone. U Ba Choe labouring mightily, twenty-three recordings have just been completed at a total cost of Rs. 6,250. A further grant has just been made by the Government to enable the Burma Research Society to send me on an errand collecting Burmese folksongs, if the University Authorities will sanction me leave. There is much yet to be done.

13: Khin Zaw I-5 (no date) 1940 API Burma
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BURMESE MUSIC.

Part III

Notes on Time.

There remains the question of Burmese musical time. Both Mr. Mariano and Paul Edmonds wrote with enthusiasm on the strictness with which Burmese musicians kept time. Very few among Burmans do not know how to keep the tiny bell (*si* စည်း) and clapper (*wah* ဝါး) going correctly when music is playing. A foot or a hand of listeners and players alike may often be seen beating time. That may be partly because we as a race find it impossible to hear music with stolid immobility. Partly, however, it is because our language is not accentual but tonal...... 533 194

Rhythm in a language such as English is largely dependent upon differences of emphasis or accent upon the syllables in a word, and the words in a sentence. Differences of emphasis or accent do occur in Burmese, but not to the same extent; consequently emphasis or accent is not used very much, if at all, in the composition of Burmese verse.

Burmese verse depends rather upon the schematic arrangement of words with certain sounds recurring at fixed points. That is, Burmese verse has rhyme, but it has little or no accentual rhythm. On the other hand timing, especially such as depends upon the number of syllables pronounced in a given period and caesuras that mark the period are of greater importance in Burmese than in English. In Burmese singing the caesuras are even more important than the sets of syllables or words in each measure. *See*, the rests on the first beat of measures 1 to 8 (Example 11 Voice)[1]. 194 533 533

The singer keeps time with a pair of tiny bells (*si* စည်း) and a small clapper (*wa* ဝါး) in his hand. The 'clap' coincides with each of the rests mentioned till the final note of the section when it coincides with the tonic.

Simple duple or simple quadruple is the usual time. In the duple the bell (O) and the clapper (X) go alternately. In the quadruple there is a rest (—) on one or the other of the middle beats. 533

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[1] Had Mariano known the significance of these rests, which often marked the beginning of bars, he would have discovered six such rests in his own notation of Nanthein-yodaya in bars 13, 15, 23, 27, 33 and 35. Make two of his bars equal one, and halve the value of all his notes, and all becomes right. In barring, I often found that western musicians mistakenly listened for the accented note. Accented notes in Burmese music do not mark the beginnings of bars. They are merely emphasised or underlined notes. The caesuras are what should have been looked for. The Burmese equivalent of the strong beat at the beginning of bars is the beat, or rather the 'clap' of the clapper. *See* Example 11*a*.

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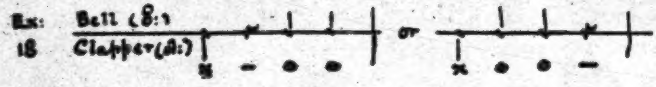
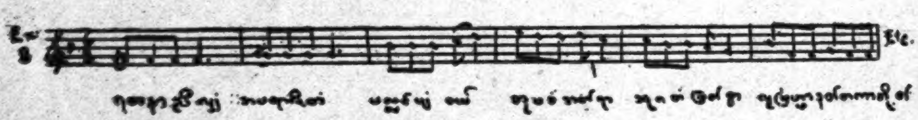
533 Thus :



No great importance is attached to the variation. In one and the same piece of music the quadruple may sometimes change into the duple, or become faster or slower in accordance with the needs of the particular piece of music. But never must a musican get out of rhythmic time[1].

533 788 562 [178] So far as I am aware compound time does not seem to be used at all in music, though I detect signs of it in the congregational chanting of certain quasi-religious verses which used to be the rage among young Burmese ladies when Myawadi Phongyi was at the height of his singular career about 18 years ago.



I give in example 8 what I can remember of the verses I used to chant as the only boy among a sort of choir of young ladies. This particular verse pays homage to Buddha. But young ladies used to pay homage to his reverence too, kneeling down and singing his praise and wishing him long-life etc. Had I not been a sort of pitch-pipe I would have been as little tolerated in that beauty chorus as a bee in a bouquet.

533 Example 11 (ဘောလယ် *Baw-lè*) illustrates how the vocal part weaves in and out of (အဝင်အထွက်) the instrumental part. Having no regular system of harmony or counterpoint the instrumental accompaniment to Burmese songs means something entirely different from what it means in the west. The instrument accompanies the voice with variations of the same tune liberally embellished. After each section the instrument plays a bar of interlude (အဆော) either to emphasise the close by repetition, or to link it with the next section. In Example 11, so far as the voice is concerned, the section ends with its last note (the tonic in bar 9). But the instrument postpones this final tonic for yet another bar playing the interlude which too ends on that tonic.

---

[1] He is not *dead* in time like players of dance music. He keeps in time because he *feels* in time. One thinks of *Tempo Rubato*, but for its implication of virtuosity.

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533

The 'instrument' may be any instrument. A melodic instrument will serve the purpose of notation better; for it will need only a single stave and thus provide a clearer and parallel reading. Anyway, a bass clef and a treble clef for Burmese instruments requiring two-handed playing will only mislead the reader. (*See* Example 12). As I have pointed out, the division into left-hand and right-hand is only of labour, not of melody and bass. A western notation of Burmese music will therefore be read horizontally, not from bottom to top.

Lastly it will be noticed that although the key is C-major, the Fourth (F) is generally sharp in this tune. It may be thought that F-sharp is used in order to approximate this note to the half-sharp F of the Burmese musical instruments. Not so. When playing other Burmese songs in C-major it is not found so often imperative that F-sharp be used instead of F-natural. If there *is* a second Burmese scale, such a scale as Mr. Mariano suspects to be a sort of minor, I believe this scale with the sharpened Fourth to be it. In the key of C with F-sharp the *bawlè* ဘောလယ် is played. In the key of F with B-natural the *dain-than* ဒိုင်းသံ is played. It remains to be discovered what other tunes are played in this interesting scale, a natural product of 7 pipes standing in hemiolic sequence of perfect fifths: C. G. D. A. E. B. F-sharp forming the diatonic octave C. D. E. F-sharp G. A. B.

The quaver rest in bar 8 of Example 11, vocal part is noteworthy. This rest is of supreme importance in the *bawlè*. Without this rest there can be no strategic in-breath at this point; without that in-breath there can be no sighing-out of the last notes of each section; without such sighing-out the *bawlè* ဘောလယ်, which after all is a tuneful plaint, will be plaintive no longer, *bawlè* no longer. With that sigh this article ends.

* * *

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I wish here to thank Ma Tin Nyun, L.T.C.L., whose teaching of music was so painstaking and sympathetic of my special needs that the lessons became a musical co-operation between East and West (such as Percy A. Scholes wished). And so the foundations were laid on which this article is a first attempt at solid building.

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Burmese AP4

JOUR. BURMA RESEARCH SOC. XXX, III, 1940.

THE WRITING OF BURMESE MUSIC.

533 The first question is should it be written at all? I am of opinion that for singing, for the voice, it will require a certain amount of temerity to note Burmese music. Fox Strangways says:—

> "It seems to us curious to draw a picture of a tune; but those who do so think not of a tune but of a mode. They conceive the tune as going in a general, not a particular direction. When a peasant sings a folk-song with six variations, he speaks of them as six 'ways' of singing it. And if you then sing him a seventh variation he accepts it, provided it is in the same mode (ထီးလွတ်). Notation, therefore, would only hamper the unlimited power to vary. It would also be useless, because the songs are handed down and valued as being 'so-and-so's' song, with, of course, all his idiosyncrasies and mannerisms, which could not possibly be noted.
>
> Grace, as a singer understands it, is the continuous flow of the voice round the graced note; and this is quite indefinable by notation which is confined to tones and semitones. Harmony, for which that notation is devised, abolishes mode; for, it in its prime, largely depended on minute difference in the 'size' of third, sixth, and other intervals. Mode depended also on certain points of rest, namely, on the pentatonic notes. Harmony can deal with these, certainly, and in doing so it takes on a colouring which has often a fascination; but it also defines what the singer left undefined; and thereby removes a certain wistfulness and charm. If there are any who doubt that charm, it is probably because they have not heard folk-song in its native haunts. Being itself a perfectly sincere thing, its charm does not survive publicity, nor the treatment of the song as something quaint, still less as something to be exploited. Folk-song is like a hedgerow flower, which when plucked, withers more quickly than one from a garden. If we were to get at its real beauty we must do with it what the singer himself has done—we must sing it all through and many times. Its merit comes from its having run the gauntlet of the best kind of criticism, that of the singers themselves. It has always been judged by results. If it did not move these singers, they either altered it or dropped it. It is, and can only be, the work of time."

That passage refers to the Indian folk-song, but applies to some extent to Burmese singing as well. In any performance of Burmese chamber music you will notice that the singer wields the time-marking clapper and bell (စး). That is not because the singer is the only person who has both hands free. It is because the singer is the most important person, who directs the progress of the song, controls its tempo, and decides its fate. There is no conductor in Burmese music. The singer fulfils some of the functions of a conductor. All the players must hearken to the 'clap' of the singer's clapper and go fast or slow as the 'claps' command. Restrict those claps either by metronome or notation and Burmese music is destroyed. The singer must not be note-bound nor time-bound. That is why the စည်း (bell) and clapper are in the hands of the singer, whose 'claps' mark the first beat of every bar; all other players hearken to those claps. Therefore I am of opinion that the singer's part should not be notated. Let him or her still enjoy absolute freedom, his or her taste being the only master, and the criterion by which a musical performance shall be judged.

As there is no harmony, there is no three-part, four-part, quintet, sextet and so on. In fact strictly logically speaking Burmese music for instruments need not be written on more than a single stave. For instruments such as violin, pipe or *hnè* နှဲ (Burmese equivalent of oboe) it is simple enough, provided that the prospective writer of Burmese music knows not only all the resources of staff-notation but also the laws of Burmese musical time. It is not so simple however in writing for such instruments as piano or *pattalar*. which require left-hand and right-hand parts. Pardon my use of the word 'part' here in its non-technical sense. The problem is to write for the left-hand and right-hand in double staves and yet show clearly that it does not mean melody and bass nor two melodies; that the two parts are really one part, the division being only of labour not thematic; that both staves together make one utterance of one melody only.

Example 12 shows the melody separated into two parts—the right-hand part in the G Clef and the left-hand part in the F Clef. As the melody bestrides the two staves gaps are left inevitably in both staves. And these gaps are filled by a liberal use of rests—rests which do not mean that there is a rest in the music, but which are 'stop-gaps,' and therefore illogical. But *see* also Example 13. These rests can become tyranically omnipresent so that the melody is lost in a maze of rests. The next three examples show the evolution of a page of piano music for a Burmese song called [illegible]

Example 14 is a specimen received from an amateur musician, whose attempt at writing Burmese music is in the manner of the previous example. Because of the more intricate time-values the rests here are getting out of hand. The melody is well-nigh indistinguishable. A strictly logical representation of it would

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resemble Example 15. But the music is still inconvenient to play from. The obvious suggestion is to put the time-strokes between the two staves. This suggestion came from a piano score of Debussy's " Jardine sous la pluie."

Debussy had different reasons, of course, for writing in that manner, the extended chords perhaps, his melody being picked out by added stems to the notes of the melody. In Example 16 however it is just the opposite. The whole thing being melody, only those notes not essential to the melody are given added stems. These added stems are also employed to give certain notes their full value. Since there can be no question of 'parts', this, the only possible method of writing Burmese music for the piano, seems the less objectionable.

As for Ornament, specimens are given written out in full in the complete notation of စိန်ချူးကြာညောင်ဘောလယ်း *Sein-chu-kya-nyaung Bawlè* for the violin.

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(opposite page 428)
428 a

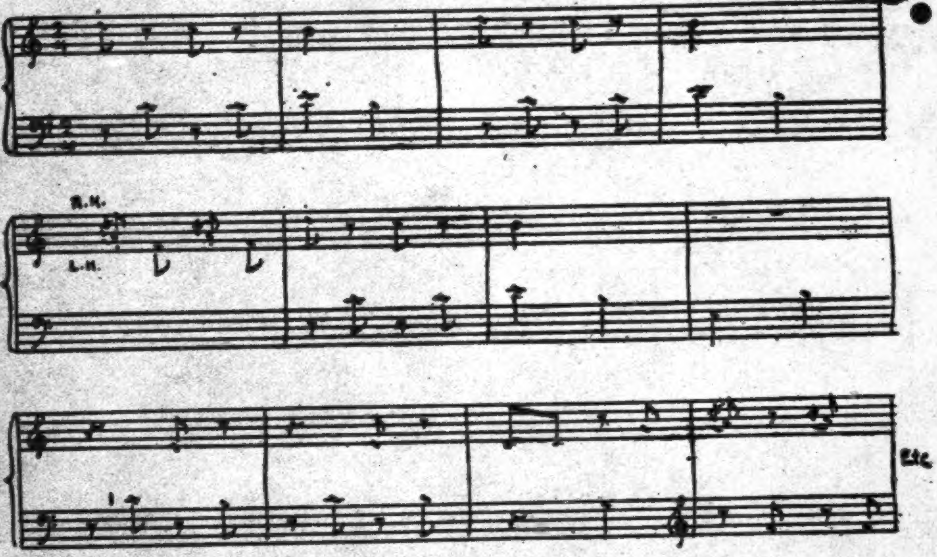
PLATE V

[illegible]

Example 12

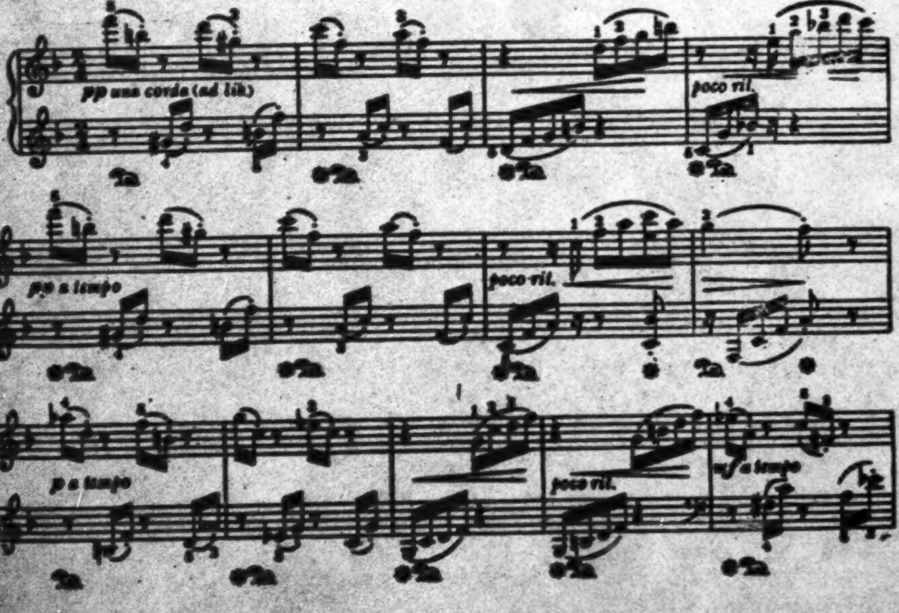
533

Pattala music for comparison with Example 13, in the manner of using rests.



Example 13

8.

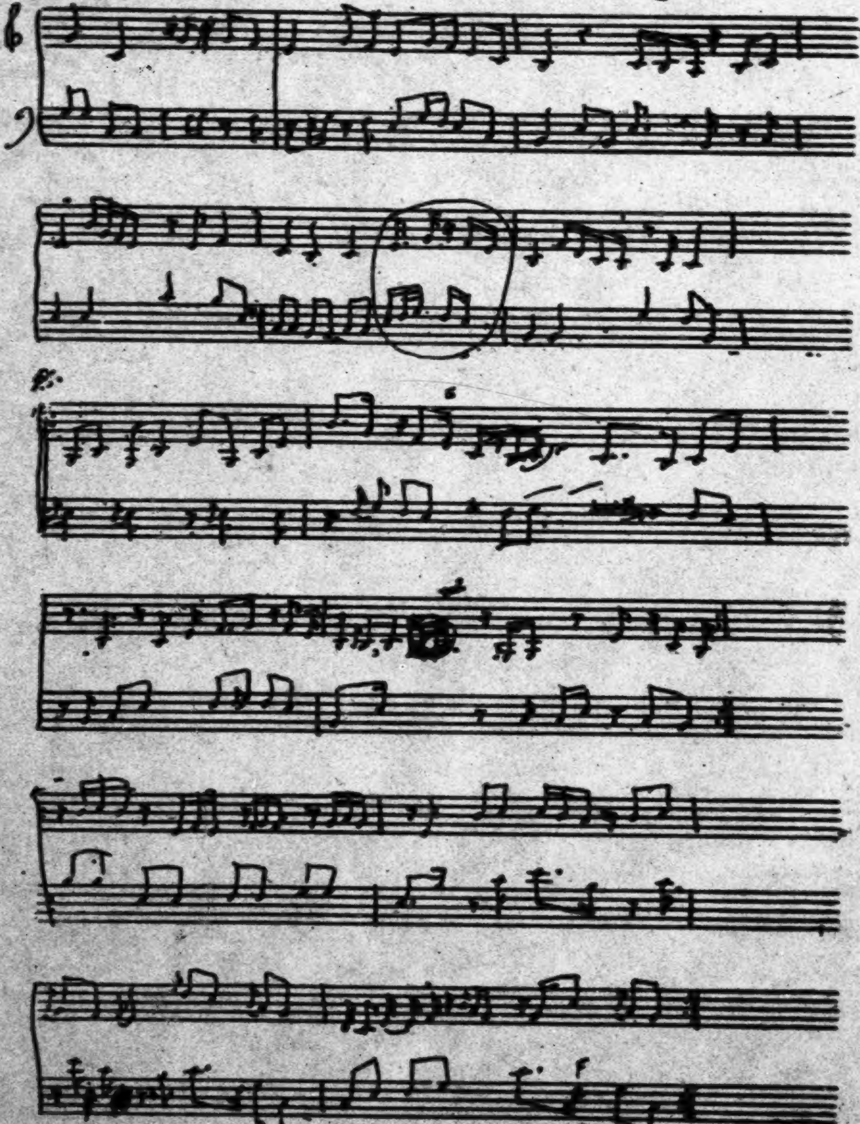

pp una corda (ad lib)
poco rit.
pp a tempo
poco rit.
p a tempo
poco rit.
mf a tempo

13: Khin Zaw 1-5 (no date) 1940 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

(428 b)

PLATE VI

●533 Example. 14 ချွန်း ချွန်း သိမ်း ပြွန်း ပိုင် from Co Thant.



13: Khin Zaw I-5 (no date) 1940 AP1 Burma
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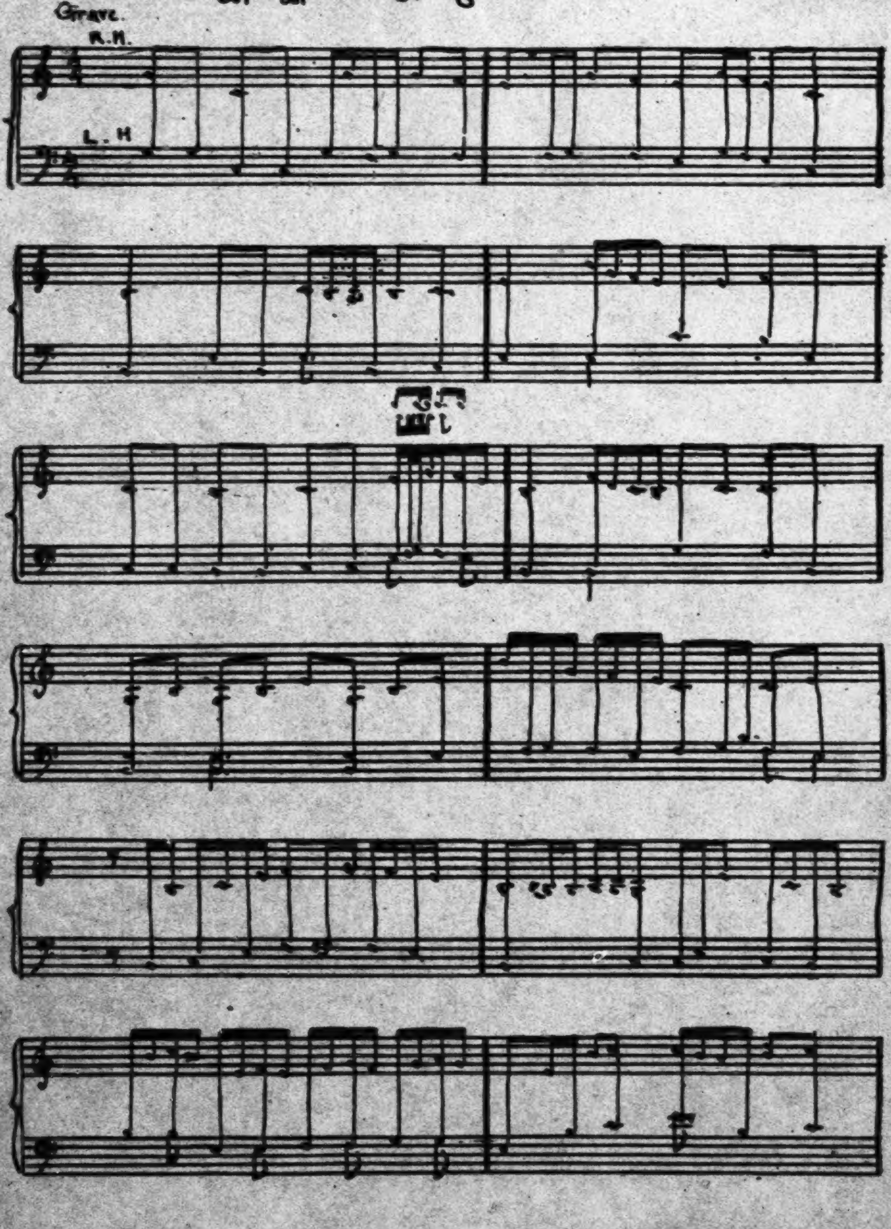
(428 c)

PLATE VII

●533

Example 15

ချိုး ကျိုး ပိုင်း ကြိုး ရှည်



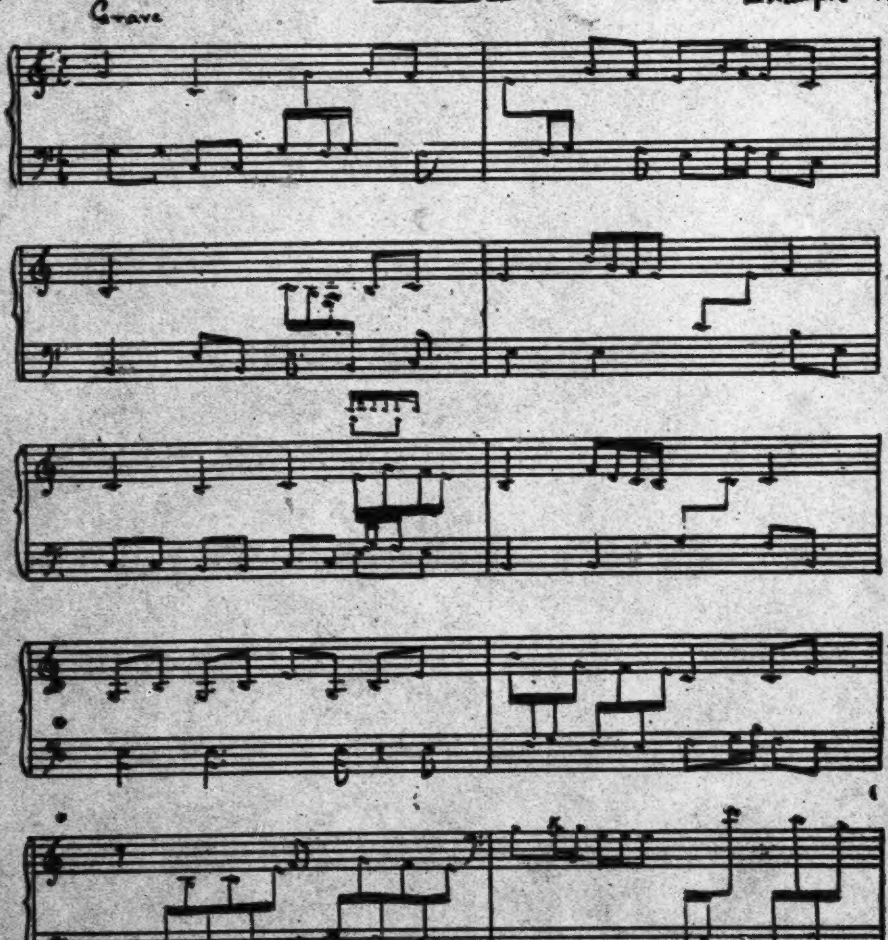
13: Khin Zaw I-5 (no date) 1940 **API Burma**
Burmese AP4

(428d)

PLATE VIII

533

[illegible] from a [illegible] Example 16



13: Khin Zaw 1-5 (no date) 1940 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

1

NOTES ON PLAYING THE BURMESE CLASSICAL SONGS FROM STAFF-NOTATION.

533 The following four songs represent only four of the principal classes of Burmese classical song. *Pātpyo*, *Yodaya* and *Talaing* remain, not to mention the minor classes. The ambition of the present contributor is to leave at least one each of all the classes as well as folk-songs in staff-notation before either he or the songs disappear. Time, means, and opportunities are at present insufficient.

Before actually playing these specimens the following points will perhaps be useful:—

(1) Mannerism has to be firmly suppressed lest it should lend a western air to these oriental tunes. In order to avoid misleading the player attempt has been made to write out in full most of the ornaments. Trill has been introduced with misgivings. It is so rare in Burmese music. So is the pizzicato in the opening bars of the first song. The turns on the other hand are ubiquitous. But there are several kinds of turns as will be seen. Phrase-marks are given tentatively. It will be best to play as written without accent or style.

(2) The piano is not playing an accompaniment to the violin. Both should be equally prominent. The two together make one utterance of the same theme. Both will follow the singer, if there is one. The vocal part has to be entirely omitted because only a Burmese singer who has slaved at learning to sing by imitation and repetition will know how to sing such songs. If the piano sounds empty it must be remembered that not only do we have no chords but also U San Win has reduced the measures to the bare bones of simplicity. Any Burmese pianist will introduce any amount of personal *fioritura*, which is the reason why it is so difficult to decide which version of a classical song is the authentic one.

(3) The use of the Sustaining Pedal when playing Burmese music is highly objectionable. Oriental tunes are conceived in a single melodic line and the undue sustaining of notes never meant to blend together can only lead to confusion. The piano can be played loudly without the use of the "Loud Pedal" which after all is meant for higher purposes than mere loudness.

(4) It is not necessary to procure a bell and clapper. Snapping of the fingers will do for the bell and tapping for the clapper. But one person should be snapping and tapping right through a song except where time is *ad libitum*. If there can be no such person, a player must tap with one foot the 'claps' which

13: Khin Zaw I-5 (no date) 1940 ~~API Burma~~
Burmese AP4

533 fall on the first beat of the bars as written. There is no accent in the music. The 'clap' is the accent. In four-pulse measures one of the beats is a silence, as already pointed out in the article. It will go tap-silence-snap-snap; or tap-snap-snap-silence, according to preference.

(5) The violin parts may be taken by an oboe without hesitation. In fact they have been tried on both the violin and the oboe, and the latter seems even more suitable precisely because the western violin technique is as unsuitable as it seems ineradicable. On the oboe, of course notes lower than B below middle C will have to be played one octave higher. There are only a few.

(6) Performers who are not conversant with Burmese classical music are requested to start the second song [illegible] at bar 11, marked "Var." because *tempo rubato* or *ad libitum* is customary at the beginning and end of most Burmese songs, and only Burmese musicians will know just how much liberty is to be taken with musical time. For the same reason the third song may be ended with the first note of the 56th. bar, immediately behind D. S. playing the postlude, if desired, as a coda.

(7) Western instruments like the piano and the oboe being keyed instruments and the Burmese scale being what it is, no amount of notation and annotation can reproduce the tonality peculiar to Burmese music. We will always find the result [illegible] *wè dai*—*i.e.* guilty of foreign accent. However, this point has been dealt with in the article.

(8) The fourth song is a complete rendering of the famous *baw-lè* [illegible] without the piano part. It is an example of elaborate ornamentation and variation. For the sake of fidelity this and the preceding specimens in staff-notation have not been *arranged* in any way, although it would be possible to arrange them in such a way that ears unattuned to Burmese music could be tolerant to them, and yet they would in no way be deprived of their Burmese individuality—if one had sufficient time, means and opportunity.

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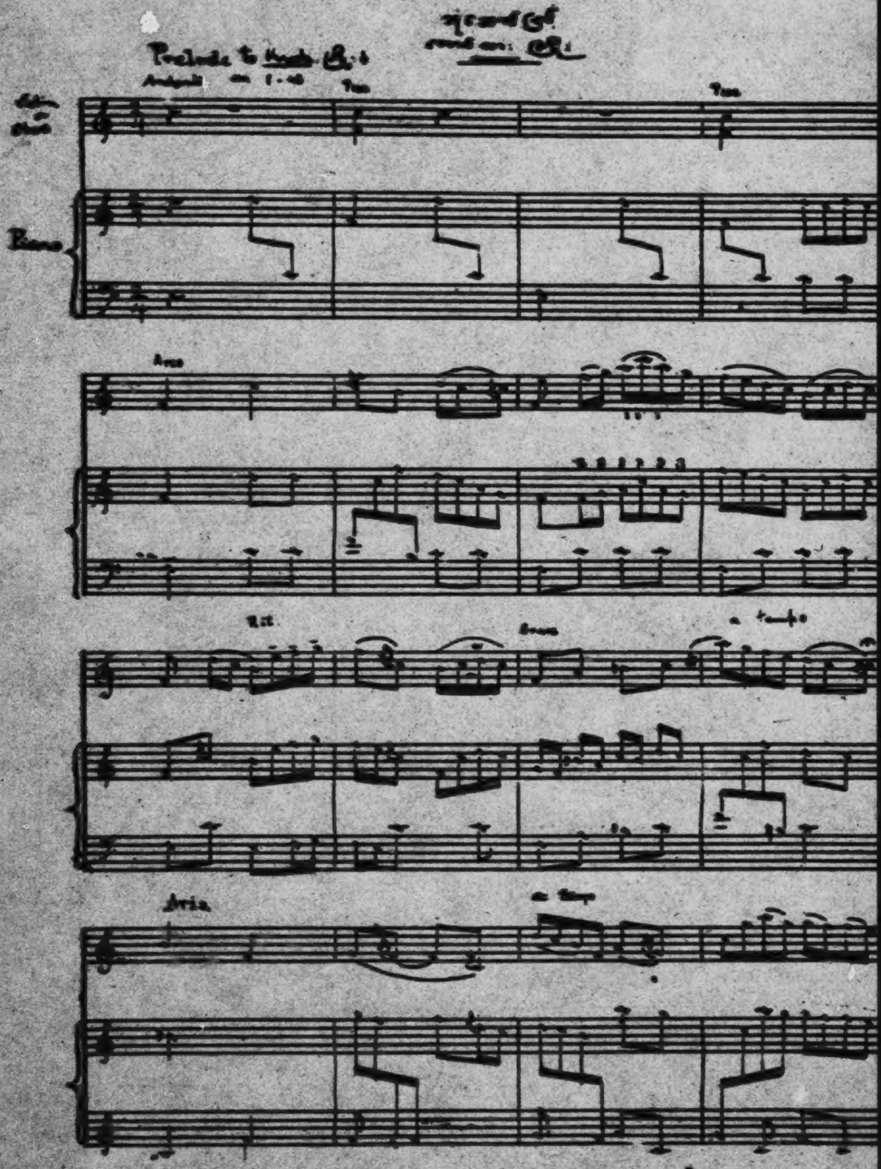
Prelude to
Piano
Rit.
a tempo
Aria

[Sample of Texts - rest omitted -- Analyst]

16;Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

I have seen and heard so much of this love of women and of its tragedies. Perhaps it is that to us it is usually the tragedies that are best remembered. Happiness is void of incident. And this love may be, after all, a good thing. But I do not know. Sometimes I think they would be happier if they could love less, if they could take love more quietly, more as a matter of course, as something that has to be gone through, as part of a life's training; not as a thing that swallows up all life and death and eternity in one passion. 000

In Burmese the love-songs are in a short, sweet rhythm, full of quaint conceits and word-music. I cannot put them into English verse, or give the flow of the originals in a translation. It always seems to me that Don Quixote was right when he said that a translation was like the wrong side of an embroidered cloth, giving the design without the beauty. But even in the plain, rough outline of a translation there is beauty here, I think: 584 533

From a Man to a Girl

The moon wooed the lotus in the night, the lotus was wooed by the moon, and my sweetheart is their child. The blossom opened in the night, and she came forth; the petals moved, and she was born. 584 539

She is more beautiful than any blossom; her face is as delicate as the dusk; her hair is as night falling over the hills; her skin is as bright as the diamond. She is very full of health, no sickness can come near her.

When the wind blows I am afraid, when the

CHAPTER I

THE ORIGINS OF BURMESE DRAMA

1. Burmese Music and Dancing

536 ✱
175

I have said that no Burmese drama is to be found before the eighteenth century. The origins of that drama are to be found in the remote past of Burma's own national development, rather than in foreign importations or influence.

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175
533 ●
[177]

No doubt, Burmese music and dancing arose out of primitive religious rituals as in other countries. Society developed, civilization expanded, and contact with the Hindus and Chinese gave new ideas, but the native element always dominated, and the music and dancing remained, as indeed they still remain, essentially Burmese. In A.D. 800 when the Hindu expansion overseas was an accomplished fact, when the Hindu and Chinese civilizations had come into contact with each other, and when the rest of Indo-China had been drawn into the influence of those civilizations, Burmese music and dancing remained independent. In 800–2, when some parts of Upper Burma were under the nominal suzerainty of Nanchao (then a semi-independent State, now Yunnan), two Burmese deputations accompanied Nanchao missions to the Court of the Chinese Emperor, and the Burmese 'sang songs containing Sanskrit words and went through spelling dances, lining up in a pattern which read "Nanchao sends holy music!"'[1] The Imperial Secretary has left us a poem describing the occasion. The following is an extract:

> Music from the land of P'iao, music from the land of P'iao,[2]
> Brought hither from the great ocean's south-west corner
>   Yung Ch'iang's son, Shunant'o.
> Has come with an offering of southern tunes to fête the New Year.
> Our Emperor has taken his seat in the courtyard of the palace.
> He does not press his cap strings to his ears, he is listening to you!

---

[1] G. E. Harvey, *History of Burma*, p. 14.

[2] The land of P'iao was the name by which Burma was known to the Chinese until the tenth century (ibid., p. 11).

175 At the first blast of the jewelled shell, their matted locks grow crisp.
● 533 At one blow from their copper gong their painted limbs leap.
535 Pearl streams glitter as they twist, as though the stars were shaken in the sky
Flowery crowns nod and whirl, with the motion of dragon or snake.[1]

The music and the dance were strange enough and pleasing enough for the Emperor to bestow minor honorary offices at the court on the leaders of the deputation. Burmese music and dancing continued to develop, and at least the music reached great artistic heights in the kingdom of Pagan, for the kings were its patrons; Alaungsithu, king from 1112 to 1167, was himself an accomplished musician, and introduced new notes and tunes. With all its developments, the music remained so national that when the great Anawrahta (1044–77) led a raiding expedition into Bengal and wanted to leave a sign that he had been there, he set up, not stone pillars as was the practice of most eastern kings of the period, but stone images of Burmese musicians. And when Alaungsithu, his grandson, later raided Bengal, he found them; and men say that the stone musicians played tunes as if they were alive, to the great delight of the homesick king.[2]

[101] Music and dancing could develop on their own without being overwhelmed by an already developed drama, as the Burmese did not know of the great Indian epics, the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*, or the Sanskrit drama and its kinsman the puppet show, although Java and the rest of Indo-China, through their Hindu colonists and kings, had definitely adopted the Indian epics and the drama as their own by about the sixth or seventh century. This absence of Hindu influence on Burmese music and dancing explains why the Burmese are the only civilized nation in the Far East who do not possess the fighting dance—the dance essentially connected with the great Indian epics.[3]

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[1] The extract is taken from G. E. Harvey, op. cit., p. 14.

[2] Harvey, pp. 30 and 48; Tin and Luce, *The Glass Palace Chronicle*, p. 114. Alaungsithu was a great warrior and traveller.

[3] A fuller account of the Sanskrit drama and the epics is given in chap. ii.

644 They themselves took part in the production of *Rama*, though it seems
536* that most of the actors at the Siamese court were professional; but
once the play had been well established in its new home, only profes-
sional actors took part in the actual presentation, for the prejudice
against the actors and the acting profession was strong: 'actors and
●[533] beggars, eaters of food thrown away as waste.' Though the play
was reproduced faithfully with all its dramatic qualities, the courtiers
were more interested in the songs, which were new both in tune
and in form. The *Rama* play at once enriched Burmese music and
verse-forms. But the court did not at once realize that a new art
had come. The Burmese equivalent of the English word 'play' was
still uncoined. They called *Rama* a *zat*, a derivative from *Jataka*.
Zat had by then come to mean a story; it could mean any story,
though to distinguish it from a Birth Story, *hto-zat* (made-up *zat*)
was used to denote a non-*Jataka* story. However, *zat* did not include
fables or moral tales or legends and fairy tales. The Burmese inter-
lude was without a name, and the courtiers realized the world of
difference that lay between the *Nibhatkhin* and the Siamese entertain-
ment. Therefore, the courtiers just called *Rama* a *zat*; the name
suggested itself as they believed the *Rama* story to be a *Jataka* story.
536* However, when *Aindarwuntha*, the companion play to *Rama* at
178 the Siamese court, was later introduced to the Burmese court, the
courtiers coined the term *nan-dwin zat* or 'palace-story', for that
play had nothing to do with the *Jatakas*, and a new name was needed.
When the *Rama* play reached the people, they thought it to be a
specimen of the native *Nibhatkhin* or *Jataka*-shown-as-pageant and
called it *Rama-khin* or *Rama*-shown-as-pageant. It was only when
the native interlude had been moulded into a more developed art
through the influence of the Burmese court drama that the term *pya-
zat* (the equivalent of the English 'play') was introduced. It is of
course impossible to ascertain when and by whom the word was first
coined, but by U Kyin U's days, *pya-zat* or 'shown-story' had passed
into general use.

To return to the court. The play was presented with Siamese
(which were very similar to the Cambodian) dresses and costumes;
644 it was a faithful reproduction of the Siamese model. The introduction
536* of Burmese elements into the play through the professional actors
was prevented by the tradition of rigid faithfulness to the Siamese
model. The Siamese courtier-captives of course discouraged any
interference with the form of their entertainment, which they took to

courtier later won fresh fame as a statesman and judge, becoming 644
known to history as the Minister Myawaddi.[1] 175

As has been stated, there was at the Siamese court a companion 536*
play to *Rama*. It was known as *Aindarwuntha*. There was also a 538
Siamese court romance of the same name and dealing with the same 177
theme. Aindarwuntha was a prince-soldier, and he had two sets of 536*
adventures, one amorous and the other martial. Myawaddi was one 538
of those who broke away from the tradition that the Siamese models at the Burmese court must be preserved without any substantial change. He did not want to have his hands tied through this tradition, and so he did not translate the play, *Aindarwuntha*, but translated instead the court romance. Then he dramatized the romance, and called his new play, not *Aindarwuntha* but *Eenaung*.[2] In *Eenaung*, Myawaddi rejects the heroic adventures and tells only of the hero-prince's romantic intrigues.

The play is far too long. The *Rama* play was long, too, and it 536*
took two or three days to present it entire. The court had all the leisure in the world. *Rama*, if translated, would require about 400 of these pages. *Eenaung* is longer; it would be about 600 pages. The play was written more to be read than acted, and as far as is known, it was never presented entire. Only some scenes were acted. The play on the whole is disjointed; it is merely a collection of scenes, connected only through the personality of the prince. As the adventures are purely amorous, there is no action at all. We are told occasionally that the prince has gone on a journey or that he has
achieved a conquest, but the scene is always the palace. Following the [533] ●
Siamese style, music and song are important elements in the play, but dances and fine dresses are absent. It is not a masque.

The merit of the play lies in its language, dialogue, and character- 536*
ization. It is the language of the court, refined and elegant as that of 195
Rama. But a certain element of simplicity is in it, and it is not too rich in words or in imagery, so that the common people could understand and appreciate it; in short, the usual clear style of the author, which is the hall-mark of his other writings, is also found in this play. In dialogue, the play retains the freshness and liveliness of the *Rama* play. In characterization, the play is a great advance on *Rama*

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[1] An account of his career is given in G. E. Harvey, op. cit., p. 296.

[2] The play *Aindarwuntha* or *Eenaung* has been mentioned earlier in this chapter, on pp. 36 and 44–5.

21: Htin Aung E-5 (ca. 1930) 1937 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

With all its faults, the play achieves what it sets out to do. It tries to compromise between the tradition of dramatic scholarship on the one hand, and the demands of the audience and the desires of the acting profession on the other. To make the compromise possible, Saya Yaw has to evolve a new interpretation of the old doctrine that the essence of dramatic technique was the logical and clear unfolding of the plot.[1] The great achievement of this play is in the way the songs and dances are knit into it. The characters sing only when they are very happy or sad, and special dances are brought into the play in a masterly way; the Shan dance is introduced through the incidents connected with the Shan merchants, and a *nat*-spirit dance through the device of making the sister such a spirit after death. The ending of the play must have satisfied both the audience and the actors. It was sentimental, pathetic, and strange enough for the decadent audience, and it afforded an opportunity for the actors to show some spirit-dancing—the basis of their profession. The lyrics and the poetical language of the play satisfied the scholar-dramatists and brought back the drama definitely to the old tradition.[2] 536* [533] ●

3. *The Baboon Brother and Sister*

The History of Thaton was immensely popular, and it was produced repeatedly all over Lower Burma, and even troubled Upper Burma saw it performed sometimes. Within a few weeks of publication, 15,000 copies of the play in book form were sold. The figure was gigantic for those days, and the people were astounded. In spite of the fact that he was now looked upon as the greatest among contemporary dramatists, Saya Yaw wrote no other play. In fact, although there is ample evidence in the play that he was intimately connected with the drama and the acting profession, the *History* is the only dramatic work he ever composed. Many imitations of the successful play were put on the stage and published, but they were unworthy of their model, and the appetite of the public for the drama remained unsatisfied until U Ku composed *The Baboon Brother and Sister*. [214]

U Ku was an able musician and song-writer. He had been connected with the drama long before *The Baboon Brother and Sister* (his first play), for he had been adviser to many acting troupes as he was a noted student of dramatic theory and practice. He wrote and

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[1] This new conception of dramatic technique is considered in detail in s. 5.

[2] An extract from this play is given in appendix x.

536* part, although there was no stage convention preventing women from
534 taking it up as a vocation. The head of the orchestra was also the
462 head of the troupe. He was the most learned and experienced
463 member, and he was responsible for the organization and financial
outlay, paying more or less fixed wages to the others, and taking the
profits himself. When engaged for a performance, the troupe was
paid by public subscription or by some philanthropic person, usually
an official, and therefore no charge for admission was made, all being
[565] welcome to it. The Burmese actors as a class, unlike their Elizabethan
counterparts who could endow a College of God's Gift or buy a
coat-of-arms, were poor. But they never starved, for even the poorest
villages would welcome and feed them on their wanderings all over
the country. The troupe was one large family, and the children of the
members accompanied it. In spite of the prejudice against them
and their poverty, the actors loved their art, and enjoyed the performances themselves.

536* There were many conventions connected with the stage, and they
can be divided into two classes: those imposed on the actors by
themselves, and those imposed by the fear of becoming unpopular
with the audience.

795 The actors never forgot that they were originally spirit-dancers,
536* and therefore they had conventions by which they showed their
indebtedness to spirit worship. Before the performance offerings of
food were made to the thirty-seven *nats*. As a curtain-raiser, there
was a performance by a dancer or chorus of dancers. Each wore a red
● [533] cloth round the head—the sign of a spirit worshipper. Singing
invocations to the *nats* and dancing the appropriate dances, they asked
for protection by the spirits, while the orchestra played a bar from each
[751] of the thirty-seven *nat* tunes. It was supposed that if this convention
was broken, disaster would befall the troupe, the performance would
prove a failure, and the actors would become mad; but often these
conventions had been known to be broken, accidentally or otherwise.

536* The actors were looked upon as irreligious and immoral, and on
463 the slightest excuse, they were in danger of being considered profane.
554 Therefore, as has been stated, they took over the conventions from
the *Nibhatkhin*. The Buddha was never impersonated, and an *arahat*
[779] or saint only when absolutely necessary, and then by an able and
'serious' actor, who had to keep a fast that day. Not even a mild
joke was to be made against the Buddha or an *arahat*, although even
monks and the religion itself could be the butt of a clown's wit. But

21: Htin Aung E-5 (ca. 1930) 1937 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

without ever knowing or caring for the European drama itself, the Burmese may have borrowed their puppets and puppet stage-craft, without ever caring for the shadow drama itself. Such borrowings were possible although the shadow drama itself never reached Burma, for Burmese trading or raiding expeditions were in continuous contact with Siam, and to a lesser extent with Malaya and the East Indies. 536 * 101 177

1. (*a*) The Burmese puppets are worked in delicate detail, and are similar in this and other respects to the Javanese and Siamese figures.

(*b*) But the Burmese puppets are worked by strings, whereas most other eastern puppets are moved by sticks from below. However, some puppets of India and China are stringed.

2. (*a*) The Burmese puppet show-men make offerings to the spirits before a performance. Such offerings are also made in Java before the presentation of a shadow play.

(*b*) But, although the offerings are not made particularly to the thirty-seven *nats*, it may be that the puppet show-men, who consider their calling to be just a branch of the acting profession, are only following the custom of the living actors.

3. (*a*) The puppet show begins with dances by animals, which are perhaps reminiscent of the Javanese 'fantastic vine' with birds and monkeys on it. A monkey appears among the Burmese puppets. [825]

(*b*) But Burmese folk feasts occasioned mimicry of animals, and that practice may have influenced the puppet show. Moreover, the Burmese animal puppets consist, in addition to the monkey, of the tiger, the elephant, and the horse. The *zawgyee* has no counterpart in the Javanese show, and the Burmese show has no bird puppets.

4. (*a*) Burmese women are not admitted to membership of a puppet troupe, and are not allowed to step on the puppet stage, even when no actual performance is in progress. Is this reminiscent of the Java show, where women are not allowed to see the actual puppets perform? [462]

(*b*) But the practice may have been only an attempt by men to reserve the profession for themselves.

5. (*a*) An appropriate tune to identify a new animal puppet is played in Burma. This is perhaps akin to the Javanese practice of identifying a new figure that has entered by the orchestra playing a special tune. [533] ●

(*b*) But the practice of identifying a new scene (which is almost the same as identifying a new figure) by an appropriate tune has always existed in the performances of living actors, and the puppet show-men may have borrowed it.

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

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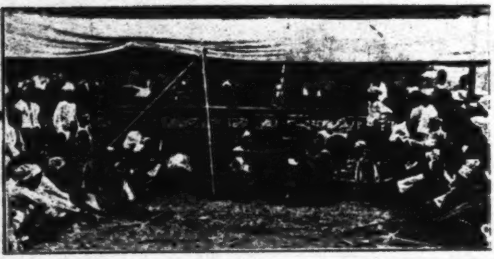
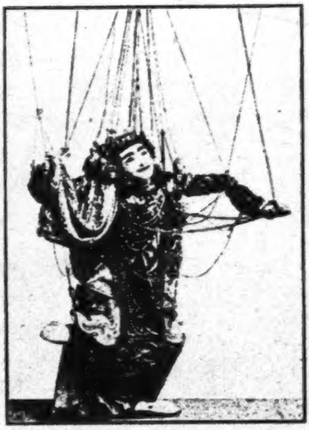


393. MARIONETTE PLAY.

foreigner, preferably from Europe, is brought on the scene. Peals of laughter proclaim these interludes from afar. The troupe of four to eight actors and actresses are paid thirty to sixty rupees a night, according to their celebrity and the distance they come. The cost of the whole entertainment, which everybody is free to attend, is defrayed by the household that gives the *pwè*. Occasions for *pwè* are *shinlàung fêtes* and other domestic events, such as the completion of a new house, or the dedication of a *kyaung*. At general festivals, subscription *pwè* are organised and are free to every one. The actors of the *zappwè* are professional, but in the *han-pwè* or *yein-pwè*, the performers are amateurs; this is already implied by the large number of performers. One or two dozen young girls of ten to fifteen years go through the postures of the Burman dance in time to music, all dressed uniformly as princesses or in some other fancy costume. This entertainment is given by day; it is the most beautiful sight in the country. The simultaneity of the movements even to the tip of a finger is as perfect as in the best-trained ballet. In the *yotthé-pwè* the marionettes are made to perform wonderful evolutions by means of their strings.



394. MARIONETTE PRINCESS.

533 Burmese music is probably the most highly developed of any except that of Europe. There is no musical notation. The subject deserves to be studied thoroughly by [536] help of the phonograph; the phonograph records prepared for this work were unfortunately all broken in transit, but through the courtesy of Mr. P. A. Mariano it has been possible to append a score which faithfully reproduces the music (Appendix C). In Burmese music, just as in Shan, the character of the language is markedly reflected. (See Herbert Spencer, The Origin and Function of Music.)

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

194 pronounce the article differently in deliberate and in rapid utterance. *Ka* in duplication becomes *ko-ga*, *pa* becomes *po-ba*, *ta* becomes *to-da*. Burmese words used within the English text have been inflected in the English way only when they have some currency in English, such as *Shan*, *Shans*. A further difference is made by the rising tone corresponding to the rising modulation of English speech in asking a question, and the falling one in answering. The former has a parallel in the Swedish; the pronunciation of the Burmese *méthilá* recalls that of the Swedish Upsalá. On the other hand our interrogative modulation of voice has no signification in Burmese. The question is formed by the use of the interrogative particles, *lá*, *Rá*. There are three quantities. *Wâ* means bamboo; *wá* means cotton; *wa* means stout. Only the most salient of these distinctions have been embodied in the transliteration. Besides quantity, emphasis (stress) plays an important part. For instance, *pála* means cardamom; *palá* means a bowl. Where the stress lies on a diphthong, the accent has been placed on the first vowel, for typographical reasons. The accent ' is used to express emphasis in the case of vowels which are stressed but are not long. The pronunciation of Burmese depends a great deal on the correct intervals or "rests." These are partly indicated by the conjoining of the syllables, the hyphening and the separation. For instance *Sinbyú-mya Shin* forms a single phrase, but the syllables have not all the same degree of cohesion. The hyphen has to be used in many cases where there is no rest, to simplify the reading and to preserve the right associations of consonants, such as in *Pôn-ná*, *ka-nyin*. Finally the cadence of speech is most distinctive. The intervals favoured in Burmese music and the tones on which the phrases begin and end indicate certain of its features (Appendix C). ● [533]

APPENDIX C.

NOTE ON BURMESE MUSIC, BY MR. P. A. MARIANO.

533 THE fundamental pitch-note of Burmese music corresponds to our A-natural. Three kinds of scales are used. The first is the Doric scale consisting of the 1st, 2nd, 5th, 6th, and 8th intervals of the diatonic scale. The second is the diatonic scale; in the Burmese diatonic scale, however, the 7th is tuned flat by about a quarter tone. An instrument tuned in this way may sound out of tune to a good European ear, but most ears will scarcely perceive the difference. There are no flats or sharps in the Burmese gamut. Nevertheless, changes of key are not infrequent in their melodies. These invariably proceed from the tonic to the sub-dominant, but without the introduction of the 7th flat, as there is no regular system of counterpoint. Here the advantage of tuning the 7th somewhat flat is apparent, for it does duty as the 4th interval of the new key. A change from tonic to dominant sometimes also takes place. The third scale is a kind of minor; it consists of the same notes as the major diatonic scale, but it begins and ends with the third interval. Strict time is observed; two-four is the usual time.

Pure Burmese melodies are beautiful in themselves. But on account of the preponderance of grace-notes (*mordente*, *acciaciatura*, *appogiatura*) Europeans find it difficult to catch Burmese tunes. Not being able to eliminate the grace-notes from the simple theme, they do not appreciate genuine airs so much as they do the medley of catches of European and Indian music which is becoming the fashion. The "*Kayá-than*" now played by the regimental bands as the Burmese National Anthem, is an example of this kind. It is made up of bits of bugle-calls (*Kayá* = bugle) and snatches of a polka.

The Burmans do not appreciate singing in a low pitch. They do not admire men's voices in the baritone or the bass. A-natural is considered the standard pitch for men's and D-natural for women's voices. The higher the tenor the more it is admired. Their ideal singer is a tenor approaching a contralto. On the other hand a soprano voice is less admired than a contralto. The propensity is to cultivate high voices in the men and low voices in the women. The professional singers are true artists and are able to command the feelings of their hearers. The *ngô-dyin than*—weeping song—invariably brings tears to the eyes of the hearers. The love songs are full of pathos. An indispensable scene in all the operas is the separation and meeting again of the lovers. It is the most interesting part of the play and is eagerly awaited by the play-goers. The best songs are sung in these scenes and the best talents of the performers called into play. The Burman is readily excited by music; the dancing songs never fail to set his hands and legs going. There is a style of martial music played at boxing-matches, races, and grand tugs-of-war which excites the Burmans to action. The performance of a complete Burmese band is a study in itself. Considering that the musicians play without a score, the harmony and strict time they observe are truly wonderful. 533

484. THE BURMESE HARP AND DULCIMER (P. 176).

[534]

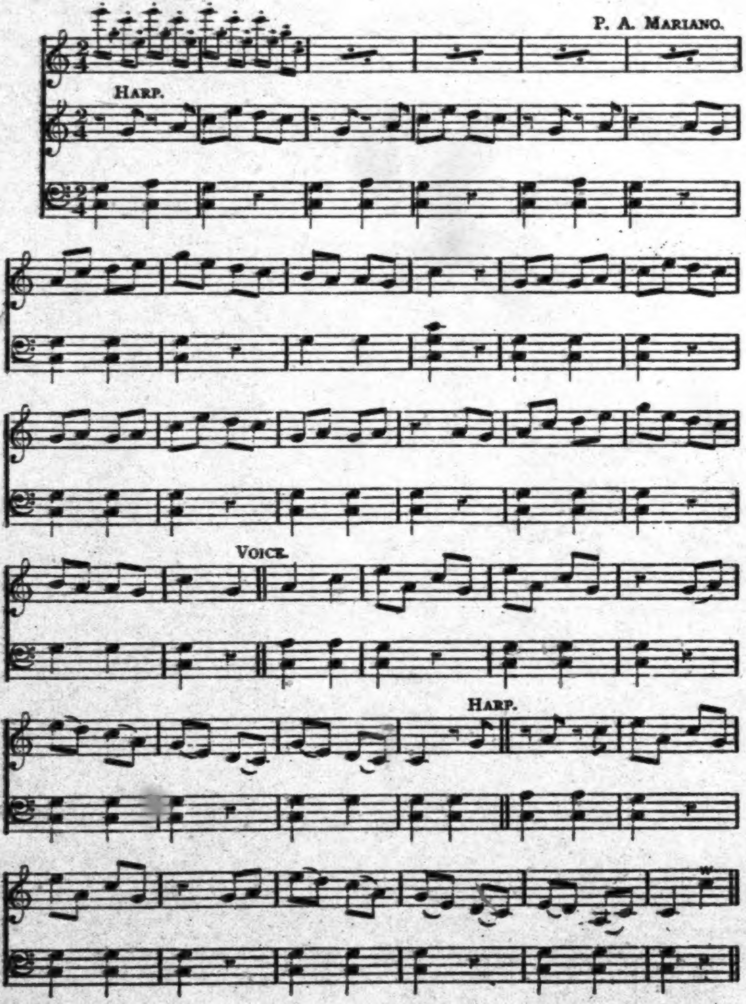
A few specimens of genuine Burmese music are appended (pp. 216–220). No. 1 is a song in the major scale, with harp accompaniment. The first twenty bars constitute the usual prelude to music of this kind. The tendency of the Burmese musician is to repeat the vocal part as an interlude, with all the variations and embellishments he can add. The last four bars are also usually played as a symphony at the end of each verse. The prelude and symphony are not peculiar to this song but are played with all songs of the same description. No. 2 is a specimen of another style, more suited for an orchestra. Nos. 3 and 4 are examples in the minor scale. Both are very ancient. No. 3 is called *Nan-thein yôdaya*. It used to be played on the entrance of the king to the Audience Hall and is the true national anthem of the Burmans. Its beauty and grandeur need no comment. No. 4 is a popular lullaby.

It is a matter for great regret that the beautiful music which the Burmans unquestionably possess is being forgotten. The modern tendency is to imitate European and Indian themes, and the time is not distant when genuine Burmese music will be a thing of the past. [177 178]

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

No. 1. *Andante cantabile.*
(Dulcimer, etc.)

P. A. Mariano.


Harp.
Voice.
Harp.

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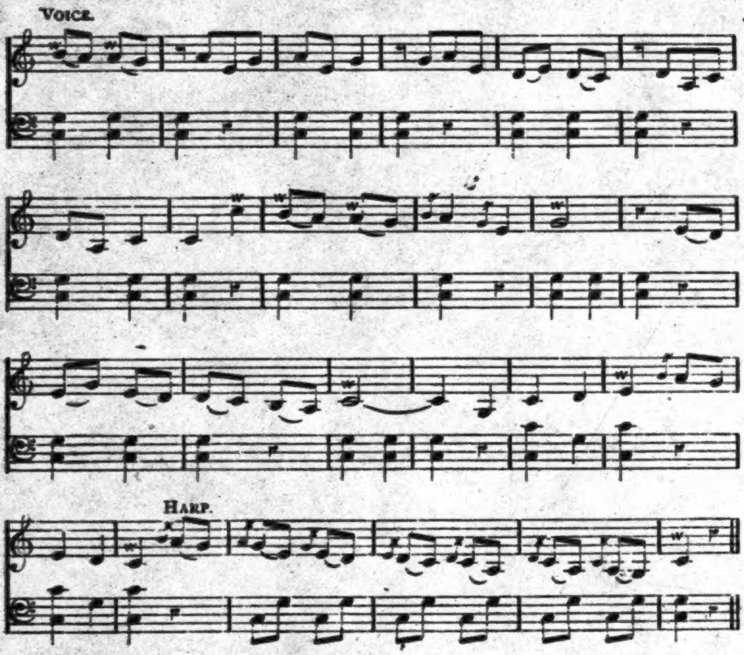
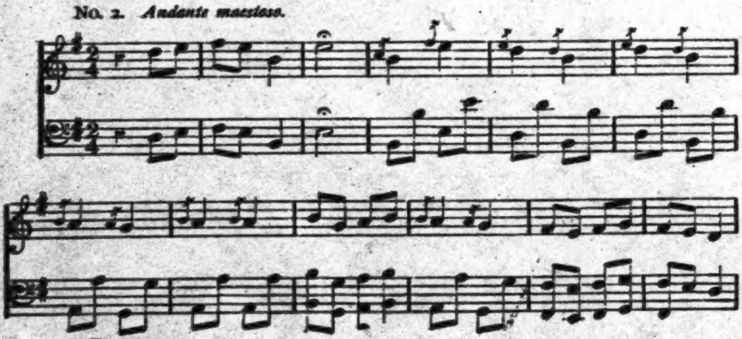
Burmese AP4



No. 2. *Andante maestoso.*



25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

BURMA

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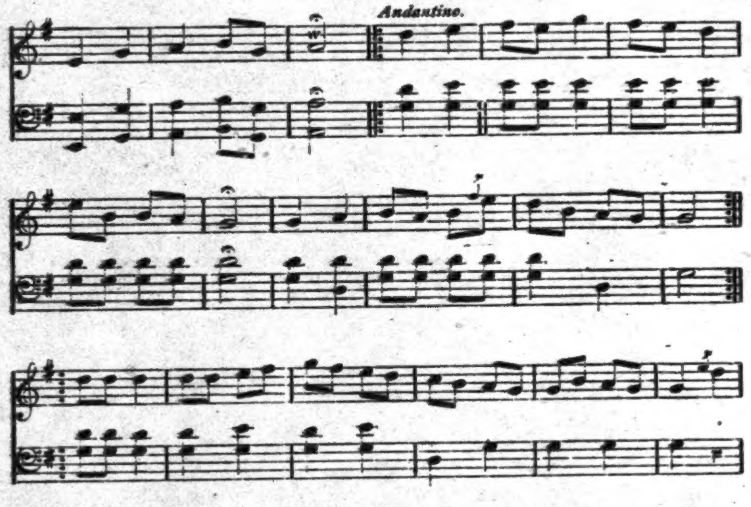

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Burmese AP4

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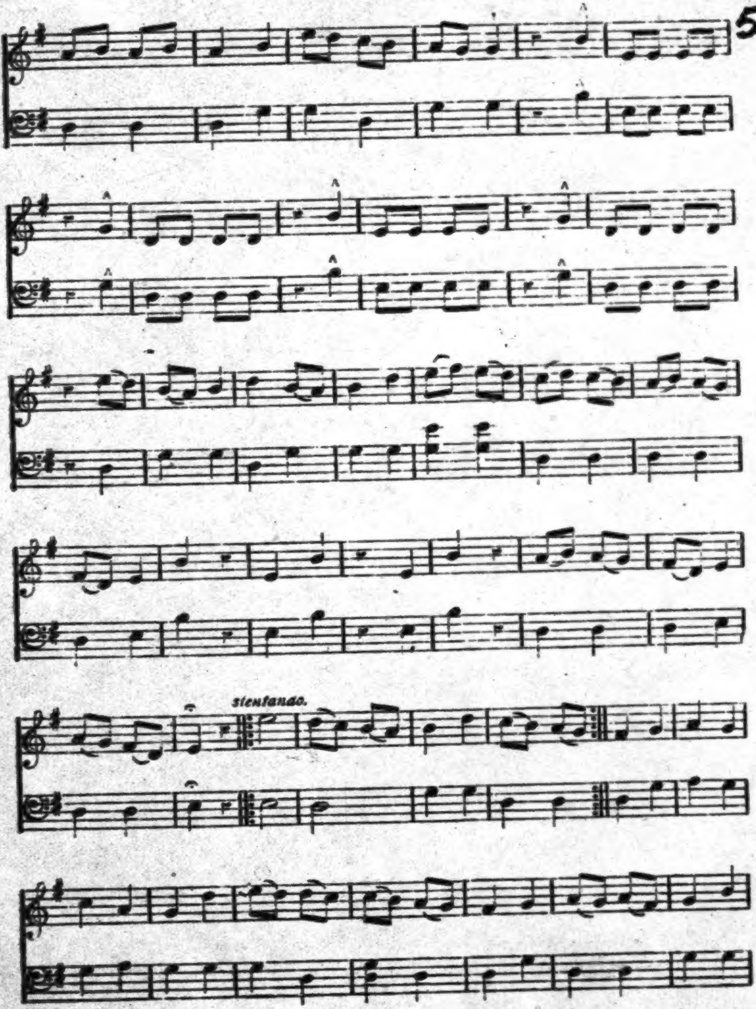

25; Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 AP1 Burma
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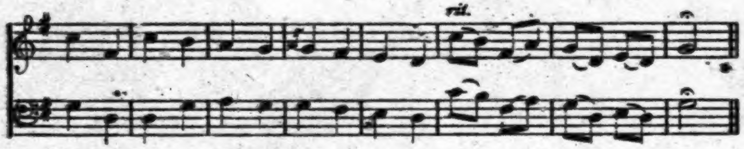
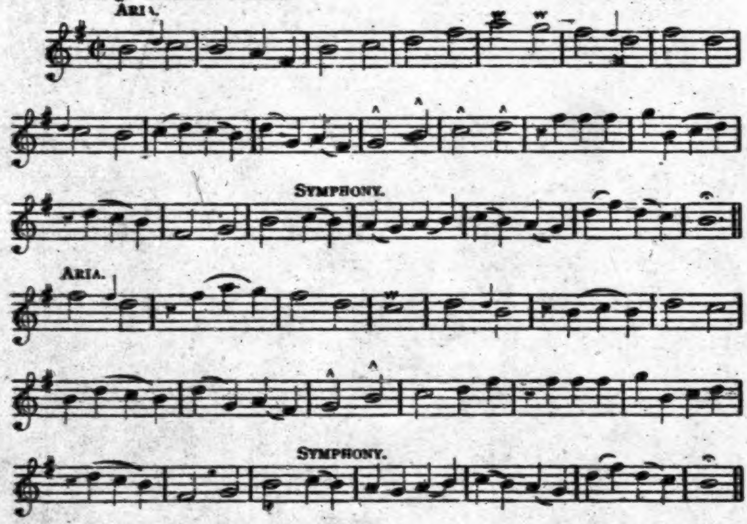
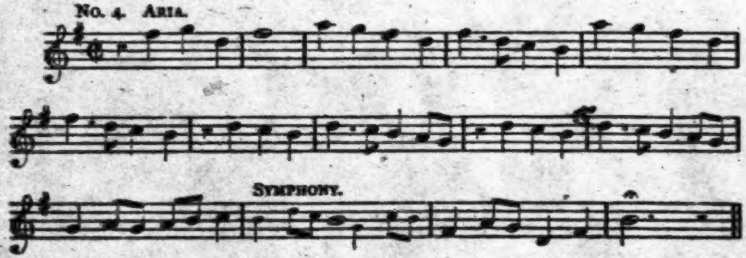


No. 3. *Moderato maestoso.*


Aria.
Symphony.
Aria.
Symphony.

No. 4. Aria.